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OTHER THINGS THAN WAR

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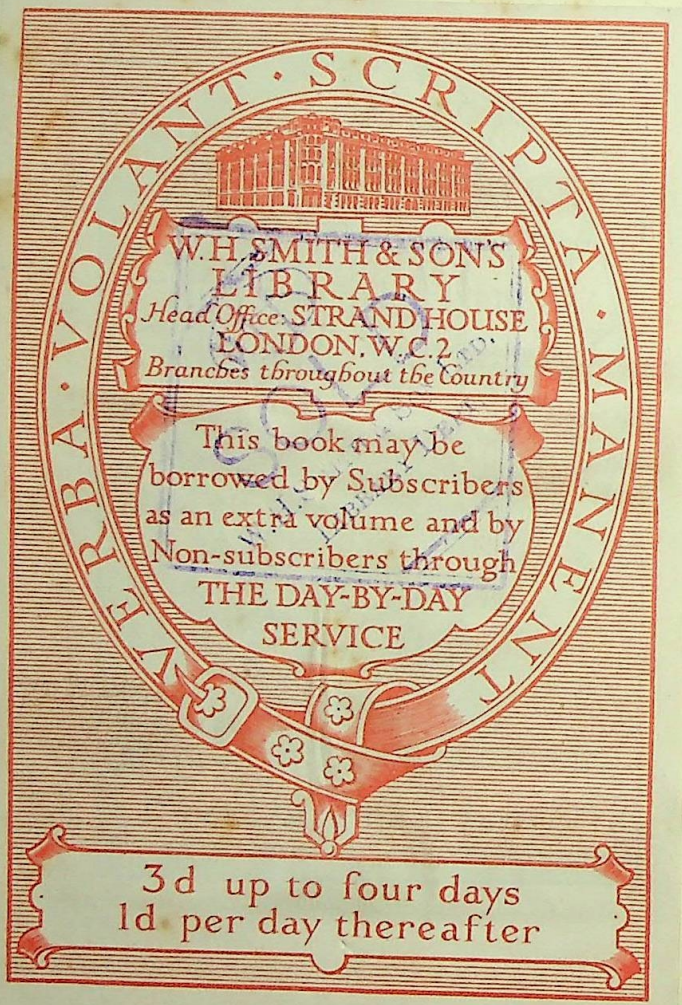

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By the Same Author

STEVENSONIANA
GEORGE MEREDITH: HIS LIFE AND ART
IN THE TRACK OF R. L. STEVENSON
THE ARGENTINE THROUGH ENGLISH EYES
MEMORIES OF BOOKS AND PLACES
BARRIE: THE STORY OF A GENIUS
BARRIELAND
WITH NORTHCLIFFE IN FLEET STREET
AS THE DAYS GO BY: A WARTIME DIARY

As the Days Go By . . . is distinguished by a finish and unperturbed grace which seem to belong to the eighteenth-century essay of manners.

Times Literary Supplement

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THE YOUNG CHURCHILL: ESCAPE TO GREATNESS

When the Boer War broke out in 1899 Winston Spencer Churchill, then in his twenty-fourth year, already widely known for his adventurous spirit as soldier and war correspondent in India and the Sudan, was quickly away as correspondent for the *Morning Post* in South Africa, where on November 15 he had the luck to be captured by the Boers and lodged in prison at the Model School, Pretoria, whence he made his famous escape in December. This little known photograph shows him arriving at Durban after his getaway to continue his adventures as a lieutenant in the African Light Horse—he was present at the battle of Spion Kop and the taking of Pretoria. Immediately on his escape a reward of £25 sterling had been offered by the "Sub-Commission of the Fifth Division, on behalf of the Special Constable for the said division to anyone who brings the escaped prisoner of war, CHURCHILL, living or dead, to this office . . ." It will be noticed from this snapshot that our Prime Minister's partiality for picturesque headgear was already evident. It will also be noticed that the passengers in the Durban boat in 1899 were full of admiration for their brilliant and spirited fellow traveller, who knew how to "look pleasant" under the eye of the camera. This print is reproduced from a photograph that reached the author from an unremembered source and was originally used to illustrate an article of his on "Young Men in the War", published in a London magazine of April 1900.

[*See page* 17

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At the Library Door

Frontispiece

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OTHER THINGS THAN WAR

Musings and Memories

by

J. A. HAMMERTON

ILLUSTRATED

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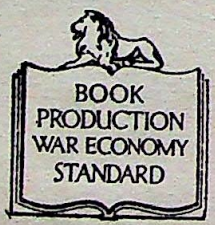

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FOREWORD

So that the title of this book of musings and memories might not mislead let me say forthwith that it is not designed as an addition to the current "literature of escape". For the First Total War, which now seems the proper epithet for this catastrophic age, is not something that the mind can sweep at will from its awareness: it overshadows all our lives from hour to hour: even those valiants for freedom—those poets, players, publicists—who early on sought in person to carry the torch of English culture to Hollywood, even to Australia, have long been caught in the web of war.

Happily, in the very heart and turmoil of the War there are moments when the mind may snatch refreshment, must if its sanity is valued. Life which is better than death, and personality which is more precious than regimentation, must be lived and expressed, while the War goes on. The longest war must have an end, but the shortest life may yield some glimpse of things immortal. Not all the blitzes London has suffered have banished the ever-renewing beauty of dawn and sunset in its sky since Wordsworth composed his sonnet upon Westminster Bridge, and nothing that can happen—and many hateful things have already happened—during the War in that corner of Sussex which I most love, and where everything in this book has been penned,

> Where the rolled scarp retires,
> And the Long Man of Wilmington
> Looks naked toward the shires,

will spoil the everlasting beauty of down and weald. These are among the many "other things" that have engaged my mind while the War blasts its foul way around the world, things of which this book is in part a recording, selected from the *currente calamo* of my war-time journalism, but extensively revised for inclusion here. So that all I wish to convey by its title is that while there may be war in the background it is with other things than war that I am here concerned. It should be added that the greater part of the book has not elsewhere appeared in print.

J. A. H.

October, 1943.

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OTHER THINGS THAN WAR

I SEE GHOSTS IN FLEET STREET

To grow old is no matter for sorrow. Every stage of life has its compensations. Thus the older you are the more of these have you amassed. Assuredly I have no littlest wish to be as young again as the Evelyn Waughs and Beverley Nichols, who, in the pre-War decade, were having such a jolly time throwing their light weights about in the literary arena. I used to admire their fresh young confidence, their manifest talents, without a shadow of regret that I was already old enough to be their father. With the youngsters of the War years I am less familiar. But for the journalist, perhaps more than for those of any other calling, not excepting the actor, the hastening years do acquire a tinge of

THROWING THEIR LIGHT WEIGHTS ABOUT.

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sadness. His continual alertness to the life of his time, so essential to his task, makes him feel more acutely than others the disappearance of the fellows of his craft. After forty years or so the Street of Adventure becomes for him a haunt of ghosts. By which no reference is implied to those substantial " ghosts ", ever increasing in number, who write the newspaper articles and the books that bear the names of non-literary celebrities. Edgar Wallace on the last occasion that we lunched together at the old Savage Club assured me he was not coming back as he saw nothing but ghosts in their once familiar places. I believe he was as good as his word, which indicated a streak of sentimentality that in myself I have always tried to repress the more I have been conscious of it. There were hundreds of ghosts for me in that old haunt on Adelphi Terrace and perhaps it was fortunate that the club had to go west as far as Carlton House Terrace a few years ago—the ghosts didn't go west!

As for Fleet Street, it saddens me a little as I contemplate the changes that have come over that highway of my heart in the last forty years or so. Too soon it will be no more than a name to those of us who belong to the older school of writers. Especially such as that waggish reporter who objected to the *Daily Telegraph's* clock face with its substitution of T.H.E. T.E.L.E.G.R.A.P.H for the twelve Roman numerals: " How can I tell when I've had a couple what the hell R minute to H means ? " (It would probably be the second H he had in mind which would have meant 25 to 12 and lots of time in hand as the pubs didn't shut till midnight then.) So changed is it now that most of the departed ones, could they revisit it in a glimpse of a bomber's moon, would fail to recognize anything east of the Law Courts. When I think of all the men I have walked with there who have passed from its bustling pavements, beyond the noise of its thundering presses, which were the amplifiers of their voices, into the Silence, it needs an effort to maintain the rôle of cheerful looker-on. Darkest reflection of all: I might mention a score or two of these vanished friends and acquaintances each of whom in his day was a " power in Fleet Street " and few of my readers would ever have heard their names. The journalist's fame does not long outlive him. Even so picturesque and self-assertive a newspaper writer as George Augustus Sala was no more than a name to the younger men, a fading figure in a fast receding literary scene that looks amazingly remote from the present, until Ralph Strauss resuscitated him in a brilliant and painstaking biography not many months ago.

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I remember reading that an editor of *The Times* had said, in a kindly note on the death of an editor of the *Daily News*, that although for many years they had pursued their individual tasks within a few minutes walk of each other they had never met. Whether this was Delane on William Weir or Chenery on Frank Hill, I cannot recall, nor does it greatly matter, since it is at least the statement of a suggestive fact, and the reader may never have heard any one of these great names in journalism. One can even recall the days when the editor of *The Times* derived a measure of his traditional dignity from being unknown to the world outside Printing House Square. It is related that when Barnes, who preceded Delane in the job, died in 1841, no obituary notice was allowed to appear in the pages of the journal he had edited. Its Editor, like the Apis bull of Ancient Egypt, was presumed to live for ever. That foolish old convention of anonymity has long since gone; the staff correspondents of *The Times* are now, but only recently, allowed to mention that honorific connexion in the books and magazine articles they write. But it is still possible with all our increased opportunities for social foregathering to miss personal contacts with fellow adventurers in "the Street". I worked for years under the same auspices, even in the same building, wrote for him when he was an editor, and talked to him by telephone, frequented the same clubs, dined in the same restaurants, sat in the same theatres, but once only in nearly forty years had the felicity to meet for a moment—Hannen Swaffer! As he hides his light under no bushel, I am quite familiar with his personal appearance, and yet have rarely clapped eyes on him. In our zig-zag way through this old world it is astonishing how many possibilities of *rencontres* elude us.

Citation of Delane suggests a word on that remarkable man who more than any other may be called the maker of *The Times*. Our able youngsters who are fired with pride at the importance of becoming editors in their early twenties should be kept humble by reminding them that Delane was only in his twenty-fourth year when he was chosen to rule the Thunderer: the youngest member of its staff. Knowledge of this once

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prevented my requiring a larger hat when at twenty-three I took my seat in the editorial chair of a provincial daily. Pitt was only twenty-four when he was called to the perhaps more important post of prime minister. Facts that should keep one's conceit in the neighbourhood of zero. In his later years Delane was asked if so vast a responsibility as the editorship of *The Times* did not shake his courage when it was offered him. "Not a bit," he replied. "What I dislike about you young men of the present day is that you all shrink from responsibility." This has been the cry of the older hands in every business and profession for many a year. Yet I suspect there are some twenty-four-year-olds in Fleet Street quite prepared to take over the editorship of *The Times* from Barrington-Ward any day. Geoffrey Dawson, who retired two years ago, had the distinction of being its editor twice; first from 1912 to 1919 and again from 1923 to 1941. Thus two of its former editors are still alive, for Wickham Steed is still active in journalism. He was one of the most brilliant correspondents of *The Times* for many years before his short editorial reign which intervened between Geoffrey Dawson's two periods. His opinions on world politics find regular expression in the reviews and carry unique authority from his long intimacy with the chancelleries of Europe, rivalling that of the once celebrated (and possibly now forgotten) M. de Blowitz. In these times when, unbelievably, a million a day is not necessarily a profitable circulation for a daily paper, it may seem odd that *The Times* boasted a daily impression of ten thousand copies when Delane became editor, and at his death thirty-six years later it could claim no more than forty thousand. Believe me, there's more in circulations than mere "net sales".

But here the reader may say: "Keep to your ghosts, these are 'phantasms of the living' you are now hunting." And so corrected my mind at once recalls a dear figure of former days with whom I had many associations, my penultimate meeting with him taking me back to Barcelona on the very eve of the Spanish revolution: Dr. E. J. Dillon. Not Sir Edwin Arnold, and assuredly not George Augustus Sala, could compare with that quaint little Irishman either as journalist or scholar: all of them famous as old lions of the *Daily Telegraph*. It is ten years since he died, so that it must be a dozen years since, on one of my many visits to Barcelona, I failed to attend a dinner party he had arranged for me to meet Norman Douglas and he was good enough to enable me a day or two later to have the joy of a *parti à trois* with him and his vivacious Irish wife Kathleen at their charming home just under

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Tibidabo in that wonder city of Spain, where in his old age he had gone for sunshine. "I came here for sunshine," he said, "and I've got nothing else: too much of it in summer." We had not met for many years and I was rejoiced to find how well he carried his load of years. These wiry little men are the long-livers. And a month or two later we met again on one of his rare visits to London to spend a happy evening together at a famous Pall Mall club. Dillon was then the *doyen* of British journalism, and one of the most remarkable men who ever walked in Fleet Street, where in the first decade of the century we occasionally foregathered. At least fifty years before that meeting in Barcelona he had been Master of Oriental Languages at St. Petersburg University; in 1884 he was professor of Comparative Philology at Kharkoff, and a year later he was at Louvain where he founded a review *La Muséon* which ran for years after he had gone back to Russia as foreign editor of the *Odessa Messenger*, where he wrote his leaders in Russian as easily as he had written his review in French. Dillon's mastery of languages excelled that of any journalist that ever lived. It is one thing to be able to read or even to speak passably well a foreign language: entirely another thing to write it. Dillon did not fuss any day about writing an article in German and another in French, to be followed by a third in Spanish! And withal he wielded as vigorous a pen as ever in his native English (he was an Ulsterman) and was to the end as alert on all matters of foreign politics as when he was the principal foreign correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*. He knew all the big European figures in politics, literature and philosophy for over half-a-century. His knowledge of Russia was profound. I am among those who can recall the *furore* which "E. B. Lanin's" revelations of Russian life created in the 'nineties. Dillon was E. B. Lanin, and his *Russian Characteristics* remains one of the most important contributions to the study of an enigmatic race. Here is a far more fascinating figure than Sala for somebody with the patience and skill of Ralph Strauss to rescue from oblivion in a well documented biography. One of my ghosts of Fleet Street.

"Alas! poor Ghost," says Hamlet. And so must I address another and closer friend of mine who a week or two ago was full of the joy of life. He was the nearest approach to Dillon in the dainty smallness of his person but in no other respect except the fine gift of writing his native language with power and persuasion. Arthur Mee, who I had hoped would read this and any other book I might live to write, is the latest of those whom I must number

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with my ghosts. Some four years my junior, his life and mine were bound together in so many ways and so long that it would take a whole book to tell the story—and I think it might be worth the telling, for certain exploits of " Hammerton and Mee " having been celebrated by such authors as C. L. Graves and E. V. Lucas, rank " among the classic partnerships of modern journalism " (as one writer put it). Here I shall content myself by reprinting what I wrote about Arthur when I heard the sad news which made me one vital friend the poorer, one Fleet Street ghost the richer:

" Even in these days when sorrow is so universal there will be many thousand hearts the sadder from the passing of Arthur Mee, that restless, brave, and stimulating soul whose chosen vocation had won him a unique place in the affections of at least two generations of young readers. Although by nature shy and retiring he possessed a strong and insistent personality which demanded of him the utmost in self-expression, and it was the struggle between these two opposites in him that gave such vivacity and energy to all he wrote, and said, and did.

" No contemporary who, like him, was primarily an editor (and he was an editor tingling with ideas for others to develop) has himself written so much or so well. Nor, one might add, to worthier purpose; for in nearly half-a-century of friendship, and in splendid years of close collaboration before the last war, I have known him to his final day as always the same eager champion of all good works in human endeavour which he set out to be with the maturing of his brilliant gifts as creative editor and writer.

" Himself a child of wonder moving through a world of endless surprise to his questing mind, the keen edge of his interest and joy in life was never blunted : it might indeed be said that he never quite ' grew up '. But what was more exceptional was his capacity for communicating to the young minds around him in that world where he himself seemed not to grow old the marvel, the splendour, the beauty of it all even under the dense cloud of War that is now for a time over-shadowing the simple, natural, good, and everlasting things in which his own bright soul rejoiced.

" In this regard his amazing energy of spirit which fired a frail bodily frame to the production of so vast a total of books and periodicals mainly for the instruction and entertainment of young readers has been of incalculable good to many millions (no figure of speech this) throughout the English-speaking world, while in the Spanish-speaking world, in France, in Italy, and even in China there must be hundreds of thousands to whom the *Children's*

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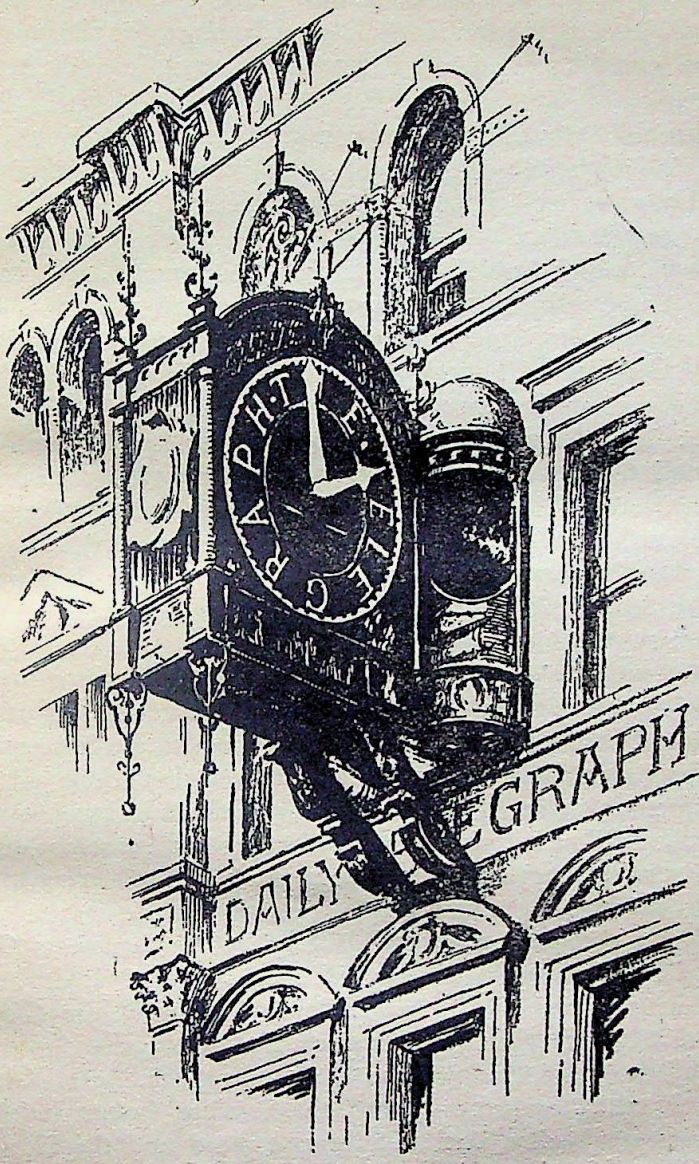

THE OLD "TELEGRAPH" CLOCK.

Long famous as a Fleet Street landmark the old clock gave way in 1930 to the present more imposing one of modern angular design, which harmonises so well with the new and massive façade of the *Daily Telegraph* building, the most impressive of any in "the Street." The sketch has been made from a rare photograph kindly supplied by the proprietors.

[*See page* 8]

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Encyclopedia, either as *El Tesoro de la Juventud*, or *Qui? Pourquoi? Comment?* or *La Enciclopedia dei Raggazi*, opened for them a magic door to world-knowledge which would not close again in their lifetime.

"Here is Arthur Mee's great reward in the creating of the *Children's Encyclopedia*—'the book of my heart' as the romantic in him liked to call it—though he told the present writer that above all his many satisfactions in life was the founding of the *Children's Newspaper*, which he wished to be his 'monument'. We may be sure that among his ultimate conscious thoughts as he was losing consciousness, alas, for ever, pending that grave operation at King's College Hospital on Thursday, May 27, 1943, was the *C.N.*"

The ghosts of these two remarkable little men (their stature was boyish: Mrs. Mee's shoes were too big for her husband!), so differing intellectually but both so tremendously vital, the one with his fill of years, the other falling short of the allotted span despite his abstemious habits (life-long teetotaller and non-smoker), have come up together by some freak of circumstance in my ghostly memories of "the Street", but there are many scores of others that arise at the mere mention of its name.

For it was my good fortune—and perhaps in minor measure my bad—on settling in London in 1900 to be admitted forthwith into a certain Fleet Street coterie that consisted of journalists, novelists and artists noted in their day for their various gifts and their common charm of personality. Good that a young provincial editor should thus in the metropolis of letters find himself so quickly on terms of intimacy with such fine men; bad that he should have been so much younger than they, for one by one he has seen them "go under the shadow of the drifting leaf". Carruthers Gould ("F.C.G."), Richard Whiteing, William Senior ("Redspinner" and Editor of the *Field*), Heath Joyce (Editor of the *Graphic*), Clement Shorter (Founder-Editor of the *Sketch*, the *Sphere* and *Tatler*), Alexander Paul (of the *Daily News*), St. John Adcock, poet and critic, Frankfort Moore, the novelist, Robert Leighton, the boys' story-teller, Arthur Spurgeon, head of "the House of Cassell", and various others foregathered daily through six or seven years to lunch and talk in an historic room at Anderton's Hotel whose windows looked upon "the Highway of Letters" as it thrilled me to regard that clattering thoroughfare with its endless stream of horse-drawn buses and jingling hansoms, when I used to go there expressly to write my weekly causerie for *Black and White* entitled "A Window in Fleet Street". Occasionally

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there came to our board others of our coterie who were not "regulars" at the lunch table: Robert Donald, Editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, Aaron Watson (journalist father of a family of journalists), Joseph Pennell, Harold Spender, Robertson Nicoll, Hall Caine, Foster Fraser, and five whom I regarded as my closest friends of all, Arthur Mee, Coulson Kernahan, St. John Adcock, Silas Hocking and H. J. Brown. Max Pemberton was also an occasional at these daily luncheon parties which were usually presided over by "F.C.G.", and as Sir Max he has just celebrated his eightieth birthday, is still, I hope, warming both hands at the fire of life; but I fear that G. B. Burgin, one of our regulars who still survives and is but three years short of ninety, is no longer adding to his immense output of novels, of which I lost count when they had totalled about a hundred and twenty.

Our literary coterie was famous for many years as the Whitefriars Club, and at its Friday night dinners many of the most celebrated men of the time were entertained by the members and gave rich entertainment in return by initiating the symposium of the evening. Tom Hood was the moving spirit in its founding: he presided at its first annual dinner on February 21, 1868, when the names of its original forty members were announced with the proviso that it would have power to increase its members to one hundred. Few of these forty names would mean anything to the present-day reader, but all were eminent in their time, which was the heyday of literary Bohemia, and thirty-two years later when my own name was put forward there was a waiting list and one had to be patient for a little while until a gap in the elect hundred left room for a newcomer. Several of the original worthies still survived when I was admitted to the brotherhood in January 1901 and two of these vivified for me in personal reminiscence the heartening qualities of that vanishing camaraderie of the arts which had first fascinated me in *La vie de Bohème* and more acutely perhaps in S. J. Adair Fitzgerald's *Sketches from Bohemia* which I had read with glowing interest on its appearance in 1890. These two were Dillon Croker and W. B. Tegetmeier: both of them authentic "Dickens characters". Croker, who had known everybody in the theatrical and literary world from the boyhood years of Dickens (he had been a particular friend of Douglas Jerrold), was probably as old as "Boz" himself would have been had Dickens seen last century out; Tegetmeier was famous as a naturalist, an authority on fowls of the air and the barndoor, and claimed as a journalist to have written more than 1,100 consecutive weekly leaders for

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The Queen—not a remarkable record perhaps as J. A. Spender's 10,000 daily leaders! He was born in 1816 and died in 1912, just falling short by four years of notching up a hundred. We often travelled to town together when he was turned ninety and I was in my early thirties and I should not dread the prospect of becoming a nonagenarian if I were assured that I would retain my alertness to life as well as Tegetmeier did. The club entertained him on his ninetieth birthday when he made a jolly speech, telling us that some work he had recently completed he considered as good as anything he had written sixty or seventy years earlier.

A favourite crony of mine was John Procter, the brilliant cartoonist of *Moonshine* and *Judy* and long Tenniel's only rival in that line. . . . But it is dangerous to go on recalling only those who were passing out of the brotherhood when I was a neophyte: its youngest member indeed with one notable exception, and now forty-three years later one of the very few remaining though not yet the oldest in years, for, on his eighty-seventh birthday I had the recent joy of entertaining at my Pall Mall club my old acquaintance, Harry Brown, widely known to all book-collectors on both sides of the Atlantic, and still as lively and cheerful as when we first met at the Whitefriars in 1900.

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WINSTON CHURCHILL, WHITEFRIAR

On the north side of Fleet Street just now there is a gaping space that was not made by German bombs. It is the site of Anderton's Hotel, long famous as a resort of journalists. As a newspaper reader in my 'teens, a year or two before I had the delight of setting foot in London, it was the only hotel there known to me by name and I had come to picture it with a dapper little white-bearded man standing at the door looking nervously through his monocle at the summons presented to him by officers of the law commanding him to appear at Old Bailey on a charge of forgery. He was what I was then planning to become, a journalist, and his name was Richard Piggott, usually known as Doctor Piggott. As a witness before the Parnell Commission he had been forced into admissions concerning certain letters that had appeared in *The Times* on "Parnellism and Crime" that left no doubt he had forged these with a view to damaging Parnell and improving his own finances, which were in constant need of improvement, for he was rather a dandy and straight journalism did not pay too well in those days. Piggott made a swift get-away to Madrid where, substituting a pistol for his pen, he wrote "finis" to an adventurous career. It is the way of youth that such events outstay in memory many of greater importance, and although I was to know Anderton's Hotel and one particular room therein for many a year afterwards, I am sure that in the thousand times I passed through its front door as a member of the Whitefriars Club during the first twenty years of the century, I seldom did so without this picture of the little white-bearded rascal flashing momentarily into my mind's eye. The very name of Piggott is enough to light it up.

A history of the Whitefriars Club and its guests would include the names of nearly all the foremost men in journalism and public life of the past seventy years and it would be well worth writing—a task that I might essay some day should I ever feel like emulating old Tegetmeier in his yearage. The club still exists, but in a state of suspended animation. It stood up not too badly to the shock of World War I, but World War II was a reeling blow. Wars are highly inimical to the social amenities of clubland. Who knows but it may be revived (there's still funds in its treasury) when we have disposed for ever of the disturbers of world peace, and what a night

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for the revived Whitefriars if the new brother of 1900, who was my junior in age by a matter of three years, could be induced to breathe new life into it by presiding over its first post-War reunion. His name is Winston Spencer Churchill. R. D. Blumenfeld, Coulson Kernahan, Max Pemberton, Robertson Nicoll were among the eleven admitted with Churchill to the brotherhood at the close of 1900, when "eighteen candidates were awaiting election". I was one of the eighteen; but a month or so later the company of Anthony Hope and A. E. W. Mason shed some lustre on those of us who were allowed in.

The future leader of the British Commonwealth and Empire (as he prefers to call it) in the Second World War was then at the very outset of his amazing career as a man of affairs. Elected for Oldham on his second offering only a few months before, he was a new comer to Parliament—a new comer, however, bearing a name well honoured in British politics. All that was to make his life world-historic, that will engage many a biographer in future years, and may well produce an international Churchill literature rivalling that of Napoleon, was still to be. Though only in his twenty-sixth year, he had already attained by his own energy of mind and character a great and rising reputation in the dual rôles of soldier and man of letters; and had he not enjoyed the dramatic luck of being captured by the Boers and escaping from Pretoria in the best romantic manner while serving as a Lieutenant with the South African Light Horse and also acting as War Correspondent of the *Morning Post*? No fewer than five noteworthy books already stood to his name. The first was *The Story of the Malakand Field Force* (he served with the 31st Punjaub Infantry), which, for a young man of twenty-three, shows bright promise in its literary style as well as being informed with a fine sense of the deeper issues involved: no mere "war reporter's" record of a small frontier expedition this. But a year later he was busy again combining the professions of arms and letters with Kitchener's expedition to Khartoum when the *Daily Telegraph* had the satisfaction of printing his messages from the field, and in *The River War* (1899) he gave us a book which for maturity of writing and observation is astonishing. It is more likely to endure on its literary merits than G. W. Steevens's *With Kitchener to Khartoum*, its only real competitor in the literature of that picturesque campaign, and Steevens was five years his senior: a biggish margin in the twenties. ("*The River War* is in some respects a finer piece of work than Steevens's more popular performance" was how I put it in a magazine article on "Young Men in

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the War", published April 1900). Here it is easy to discern the command of words which in later years was to make him a veritable "lord of language" (Wilde's phrase) and one of the greatest orators of all time.

1900 was the busiest year of his pen for many a year to come. In quick succession appeared his only novel *Savrola*, which I'm sure I read and wrote about, but it is represented in my memory by a blind spot, next *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria* in which his war correspondence was deftly wrought into an exciting narrative, and then *Ian Hamilton's March*. "A young man in a hurry," indeed, for at twenty-five he had already taken a foremost place as a man of action, a historian and a fearless critic. A study of these early writings would leave hardly a doubt that had world-events pursued a more tranquil course the name of Winston S. Churchill would one day have taken its place amongst the foremost literary geniuses of his age. Sixteen years later, in the middle of the First Great War, another—and a warm friend of mine—who joined our brotherhood soon after 1900, and who had been attached to Churchill in a secretarial capacity before the eclipse of 1915, wrote a fine, indeed a prophetic vindication of him in *Winston Churchill in Peace and War* (by A. MacCallum Scott, M.P.) which well deserves rereading in the unimagined era of this Second World War.

Typical of him who became a Whitefriar in 1900 was the fact that he regarded himself as no ornamental member of the fraternity; but took his active share in promoting its social and intellectual life. At the memorable Ladies' Banquet (a recent departure from the more ancient rule of the order) on May 4, 1901, he presided and, accompanied by his mother, Mrs. Cornwallis West (for Friar Winston remained a celibate for eight more years), received the guests in the banqueting hall of the Hotel Cecil. The company was certainly brilliant, the speaking no less. Also it was Marie Corelli's first appearance at a literary gathering and though a mere handful of us who then "assisted" now survive, the pensive mood that comes when one reads over that list of guests long since departed is lightened by the great privilege of having seen the young Churchill at the start of his career and forty-two years later close upon his apogee as a world figure. Characteristic of his chairmanship on that occasion was the precise way in which he kept to the programme of the evening. It was noted in our *Whitefriars Journal* that though the time-table gave 10.5 as the limit for concluding the after-dinner proceedings (followed by a *conversazione*) the programme marched with the clock and even got a little ahead, finishing

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at 9.58. Marie Corelli was an outstanding success, both for the matter of her witty speech and the manner of it; she responded to Ian Maclaren's (Dr. John Watson) humorous proposal of the toast "Sovran Woman"; and Mrs. C. N. Williamson, most charming of all the women novelists I have known, was no less amusing in proposing "Mere Man", to which Friar Winston replied. His little speech on that occasion reflects so pleasing a sidelight on himself as an after-dinner speaker that I am sure my readers will be glad to read it as reported in our *Journal*:

"I have on several occasions been asked to do things which have seemed extremely difficult, but I have never been asked to face any task half so formidable as that which my brother Friars have laid upon me in responding for 'mere man'. We have heard a great deal about women tonight, and man has hardly come into the question at all, so from the charming speeches we have heard I can get nothing to assist me in embarking upon this important subject—for few subjects are so important in the world as 'mere man'. Personally, I confess, if saying so is no insubordination to the rules of the monastery of the Whitefriars, I think the expression 'mere man' is perhaps not altogether well chosen, for it seems to insinuate that the expression 'sovran woman' has been used with a somewhat satirical motive. I said I find great difficulty in discussing the subject. I cannot talk politics, though, after all, man is concerned with politics. The art of governing his fellow men is one of his chief functions, but, of course, in the Hotel Cecil no association with politics at all can be admitted. I do not see what I can say about man as a writer, for though, undoubtedly, I had better not be drawn into making comparisons, we have a writer here to-night who does not come under the description of mere man, and whose reputation is known from one end of the country to the other. Another great function of man is as a soldier, but I do not see how I can say anything with regard to that now, because, after all, the fighting qualities of men have been rather to the front lately, and I think we have had quite enough of the alarms of war, and shall all turn with considerable satisfaction to the piping times of peace.

"So I do not see what I can discuss about mere man unless it is his politeness, which seems to me his great feature. You see he arrived here first, and, as Mrs. Williamson stated, woman came here by his invitation. I must point out that, from the confused recollections I retain of Adam's diary, if woman at any rate came into the world at Adam's invitation, he was asleep when it was

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given. However, when she came, man, with his customary courtesy, immediately yielded the first place to her, although she was the second to arrive, and she has held it since—the first place in every heart, the last word in every quarrel. As Miss Marie Corelli has said, sovran woman is queen all round the world, and sovran man, or mere man, as it is put on the toast list, knows it, or, if he does not, is made to know it—and I think it is very right and proper he should know it. And without in the least denying that fact, I feel, in responding to the toast as a mere man, that I must congratulate the proposer of it upon the many kind things which she has found it possible to say about that insignificant section of the human race which was under consideration, and also personally for the extremely kind way she honoured me by alluding to myself."

And as a further item of early Churchilliana this summary of his reply to the toast of the chairman's health also asks to be quoted from the same source at a time when the Prime Minister's travels take him round the great globe itself from continent to continent with a near approach to Ariel's speed:

"He devoutly hoped he should travel no more, for the more he had travelled the more he had realized that, for those born in England, that country was the only one to live in. And if there was any one part of England he preferred above all others it was London. And if there was any one occasion above all the others when he would be in London it was on the occasion of the Whitefriars Club ladies' night. They had their weekly dinners, of course, but without the annual festival at which the ladies were invited it would not be a very human or a very natural affair. It was only on those occasions that they offered a real representation of the great world outside, for what was life but a judicious—occasionally an injudicious—mingling of the monastery and the convent. He felt very proud to have been selected to preside on that occasion as the Friar on duty in that particular cloister and he trusted that the Friars, although they met and consulted together austerely and deliberately once a week, would not during the remaining days forget the influence of sovran woman, to whom rather feebly, but still devotedly, they had tried to show their reverence, and their respect, and their affection."

Other occasions of his services to the brotherhood in their happier years I could recall, as those when he brought Lloyd George, and the late Duke of Marlborough, "my noble kinsman", and I think that he was there also when Neville Chamberlain was our guest; whenever he graced our gatherings there was a

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quickened play of wit and wisdom with never a word of politics. Great nights these, and if a later generation in Fleet Street may see their like when Peace returns the ghosts of Friars dead and gone would be happy to know that the old spirit of social intercourse and good talk about life, literature, the arts, was still to be heard around tables whence the dread shadow of Rationing had been lifted.

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BERNARD SHAW AND A DRESS SUIT

WHEN in 1900 I had the audacity to publish a book about J. M. Barrie which claimed to be a biographical and critical study, more than one of the reviewers expressed surprise that a volume should be devoted to a living personality, quoting Solon's familiar maxim " Call no man happy till he dies". Only a dead lion was thought to be eligible for the attention of the biographer. It would appear that here I was something of a pioneer; biographies of the living have now become a literary vogue. And as Bernard Shaw has at no time displayed any false modesty in pretending to discourage an admirer from making his life and work the theme of a monograph, even encouraging attack as readily as praise, he is of all living men of letters the most biographed; one of his American Boswells (appropriately a professor of mathematics) having written no fewer than four hefty tomes about him and his place among the immortals. His own kindly co-operation with the notorious Frank Harris on the Life which appeared in 1930 did more credit to his heart than to his head. But no literary personage has ever in his lifetime had the fun that Shaw has enjoyed of reading books about himself which by now must occupy as much, perhaps more, library room than even the rich merchandise of his own mind.

That Shaw is " the greatest man of my time " may be true, but neither Dr. Joad, who has been more emphatic in this assertion since reading Hesketh Pearson's masterpiece of biography, *Bernard Shaw : his Life and Personality*, which was perhaps the king book of 1942—neither Joad nor I will be alive when it will be possible to accept that estimate of Shaw without demur. The greatest literary figure of his age will probably be posterity's verdict, but " the greatest man " is another matter, and one on which I am not prepared to speculate. To illustrate how precarious are these " greatest man " prophecies, it may be worth while recording that an interviewer to whom Dr. Joad recently gave his reasons—most of them sound and all of them brilliantly stated—in support of his assertion, observed " perhaps one day someone will pay such a tribute to Cyril Joad".

The unique quality of Shaw considered as amongst the immortals of all ages is his terrifying vitality. As an eater of vegetable matter he differs enormously from his remote ancestors of the Cretaceous period, those vegetarian dinosaurs who stood about 30 ft. high,

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weighed several tons, and trod the earth on their hind legs, but failed to develop brains any larger than a kitten's. Shaw has said in one of his less lucid moments that a cat could be taught to write as well as Shakespeare. In the many million years that have passed since the smaller flesh-eating dinosaurs ate up their overgrown vegetarian relatives there has been a considerable enlargement in vegetarian brains; no post-Shaw critic is ever likely to suggest that you could teach a kitten to write as well as the author of *Back to Methuselah*. Albeit, if a cat could give us a Lear a kitten might be equal to a Shotover.

This, of course, is merely meeting Shaw on his own ground of buffoonery. Vegetarianism, which may be said to have reached its apogee in his many-sided personality, has provided him with such vast reserves of mental and physical energy that his personality embraces the characteristics of both sage and saltimbanque. In an age of showmen he is easily the star turn, yet even when he was clowning as "Joey", or now wise-cracking as Pantaloon, there is often a measure of unassailable logic in his utterances that makes one the more resent his antic disposition when we are giving ear to his wisdom. Most healthy beings seem to recognize that there is a time for fooling and a time for being serious, but the elements are so mixed up in Shaw that their segregation seems impossible: we must accept his wisdom wrapped up in folly, his funny bone with scraps of sagacity adhering. His greatest rôle has been that of Democracy's jester and as Demos will listen more readily to the voice of the complete fool or to the thunderings of the humourless agitator, it is not easy to assess the beneficent results of Shaw the reformer alongside those of Shaw the showman. What we do know is that he has been the deepest-seeing prophet of his age, no Jeremiah foretelling doom, but inspired with a vision of a fairer world towards which he has urged humanity with a biting tongue and "laughing Irish eyes". His overlapping contemporary Meredith (born twenty-eight years before him) on whom the comic muse had smiled less mischievously than she has upon Shaw, had foreseen the age which Shaw was to serve as prophet with a clearness not less than its prophet exposed it to itself, if we may take the Diaper Sandoe verses from *Richard Feverel* as reflecting the mind of the novelist:

An Age that drives an Iron Horse,
Of Time and Space defiant;
Exulting in a Giant's Force,
And trembling at the Giant.

Saltimbanque

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An Age of Quaker hue and cut,
By Mammon misbegotten;
See the mad Hamlet mouth and strut!
And mark the Kings of Cotton!

From this unrest, lo, early wreck'd,
A Future staggers crazy,
Ophelia of the Ages, deck'd
With woeful weed and daisy!

No man has done more than Bernard Shaw to show that age to itself, and as seer and prophet "the grand old boy", as his ablest biographer calls him, can reflect when munching his valedictory apple that he is not being "thrown unused upon the scrap-heap".

I have been tempted to these remarks only to show that I account myself one of his admirers before I proceed to set down a minor incident which is typically Shavian and might else be thought set down in malice. On Friday, February 16, 1906, I happened to be one of a small company gathered in a Fleet Street club room, where we dined and wined worthily while our distinguished guest ate his apples and lettuce, before listening to an address by Bernard Shaw, whose dislike of the baptismal George had not yet led to its suppression. Those of the company present who still survive, if their memory is as retentive as mine, will endorse my account of the amusing incident which, more than the brilliant sense and blatant egotism of the speaker, made the evening memorable to me. Shaw, who was to state the case for a national theatre, had a good deal to say about an English dramatist who could be emulated by a cat and whose plays, compared with his own, figured in the repertory of the state theatre at Berlin as one to five, or in some such disparity. We were getting used to that sort of talk from him even in 1906. In the discussion which followed one of the speakers was Mostyn Piggott, noted in his day as a ready-witted and challenging after-dinner orator. Piggott alone of those present was in full evening dress, it being the custom of the fraternity to dine in "morning dress", or "lounge suits", which had but recently displaced the old frock-coat. Piggott apologized for his dress clothes needlessly, as several of our members being dramatic critics had occasionally to be garbed for a theatre engagement following our early club dinner and had to dine in the uniform of the dress circle and stalls. But he made a slanting dig at our famous guest, while caressing his flowing Victorian moustache of ruddy hue, by stating that the reason for his expanse of white shirt front and his "tails" was that

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he had to proceed to one of the theatres as soon as he had finished his brief contribution to the discussion in order to assist, as the French put it, at the first night of the revival of a play by the despised English dramatist referred to by the guest of the evening in such terms of invidious comparison with himself: "a play that has enjoyed thousands of revivals in all parts of the world and in all civilized tongues during the more than 300 years that have gone by since it was first produced."

Immediately after touching off this squib, Piggott had to leave the dinner table, and it was fortunate for him that he went, else his face would have been not less red than his hair if he had stayed to hear the Shavian response. This I shall endeavour to summarize in something like Shaw's own words, but with no suggestion that I can do more than give an impression of his Tommy-gun answer to the squib.

"When I was still a hard-up dramatic critic on the *Saturday Review*, I was asked one day by Mr. R. B. Haldane if I'd care to meet two or three friends of his at dinner in his flat at Whitehall Court: Mr. Asquith, Mr. Arthur Balfour, and one or two others. A men's party. On my accepting he said (doubtless out of consideration for my impecunious condition) 'Don't trouble to dress'. Now this presented me with no small problem, for the only decent suit I possessed at that time was an evening one needed for my work as a theatre critic. My two everyday suits were shabby in the extreme, but as such they were the best my limited means enabled me to maintain. If he had only said nothing at all about 'not dressing' I could have gone in my swallow-tails with the best of them! But here was I forced to buy a new reefer suit in blue, which I could ill afford, just to go 'not dressed' and that fine swallow-tail get-up lying there asking to be worn. Well, you can imagine my astonishment when I stepped into the lift at Whitehall Court to bump

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into Mr. Asquith complete with snowy white front and full evening dress. Still, I thought that Mr. Haldane might have forgotten to tell him not to dress and Mr. Asquith had assumed there would be no departure from the regular society custom of the time. But when we stepped out at Mr. Haldane's landing and the door was opened to us, I was amazed to see our host himself coming across the hall to greet us in full evening dress. This I thought the unkindest cut, for I had expected that my host at least would keep me in countenance; and already arrived, garbed like the others, was Mr. Arthur Balfour. Alone among that dinner party wearing a reefer suit bought at ruinous expense was I, feeling that I could have held up my head with the best of them if I had only been permitted to wear my professional get-up. . . . As for the fact that Mr. Piggott has had to dress up like that to witness a Shakespearean revival, I will only say that if it is necessary to wear those clothes to enjoy one of Shakespeare's plays there must be something the matter with the play."

I have frequently related this diverting bit of Shaviana which sounds all the better if given with an imitation of his Irish brogue. No record of it appears in the private reports of the Whitefriars Club, which was the scene of its telling, here was the only note our secretary thought worth saving from the rich obiter dicta of the discussion, in the course of which one of the speakers had expressed the opinion that Dickens could not have written a good play :

SHAW : Dickens is nothing if not dramatic. To say that Dickens's characters are not dramatic on the stage is absurd. Why several of my own best characters in my most successful plays have been cribbed from Dickens. And my last words to all playwrights when hard up for ideas or characters are "go to the Dickens !"

The truth in this will not be gainsaid, but like so much of Shaw's talk and writing, it is not all true. If Dickens could have written a good play he would have written one. He was even more attracted to the stage than to novel writing, but he never wrote a good play. It is one thing to create dramatic characters, another to bring them to life in a drama which runs to say 14,000 spoken words instead of a novel that may extend to a quarter of a million.

But returning to the graver matter of the dress suit, it was my turn to be surprised thirty-seven years after that particular night at the Whitefriars Club on reading the following in Hesketh Pearson's captivating pages :

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" His clothes were perhaps symbolic of his soul : at least they differed from everyone else's. His collars were always soft and he did not wear a shirt, believing that it was wrong to swaddle one's middle with a double thickness of material. Instead, he wore some head-to-foot undergarment known only to its maker. He made a suit of clothes last him from six years to sixteen : ' The result is that my clothes acquire individuality, and become characteristic of me. The sleeves and legs cease to be mere tailor-made tubes ; they take human shape with knees and elbows recognizably mine.' His reputation for sartorial eccentricity once put him in an awkward position. R. B. Haldane, the liberal politician, gave a dinner-party to a number of social nobs—Balfour, the Asquiths, and so on—and having heard of Shaw's refusal to wear evening clothes as a dramatic critic, asked him to come in morning dress. Assuming he was going to meet a few labour M.P.s, and, excepting his evening dress, having nothing but his everyday clothes to appear in, Shaw bought a respectable black suit with his hard-earned savings, and walked right into a party of white shirt-fronts and low necks, the only person not dressed for the occasion. ' It was a social galaxy which I could depict only by quoting Byron's description of the Waterloo ball at Brussels in 1815. I felt, as to my double-breasted tailless jacket, like a ship's purser at a wedding, and, as to my trousers, like a city missionary. But I did my best to make them all feel that they had committed a painful solecism in dressing for dinner. I took Margot Asquith in to dinner with unshattered *aplomb* and carried it off as best I could. But the surest way of making me swear is to revive the legend of my objection to wearing evening dress.' "

The reader will observe (1) that Shaw is alleged to have refused to wear evening dress as a dramatic critic ; (2) that he bought a respectable black suit ; (3) that the men's party was a slap-up affair attended by a number of social nobs with their women folk, and (4) that he really had no objection to wearing dress clothes. As a person with an incurable desire to come by the facts, due to my long years of encyclopedia-making, I submit that there is insufficient evidence for (1) and I have sought in vain for confirmation from any contemporary critic surviving from that remote period (1895–98), but have found several who at a somewhat later date have often met Shaw dressed like any other " social nob", while (1) and (4) are self-contradictory. My recollection of the *blue* reefer suit is worthier of credence than a respectable *black* suit (2), as reefer suits are seldom made in black cloth, for it will be noted

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that it was not a morning coat of the style usually made in black material, but a " double-breasted tailless jacket". That even the noble apartments of Whitehall Court were (3) not well adapted for scenes of revelry by night with the lamps shining brightly o'er fair women and brave men will not be disputed ; but Lady Oxford, who was a young wife at the time just recently entered upon her resounding career as a political hostess, could confirm the details of the occasion and enable us to decide whether it ever took place at all. It is enough that it may have happened both ways in the fertile imagination of the intellectual wizard of our age. But it seems to me that there is a certain entertainment value in drawing attention to the matter in a spirit of the friendliest criticism, for, never more than an admirer of the protagonist and long inclined to be antipathetic to the man as a clown of genius, I found myself completely won over to him on the human side in this great and final biography which I have been reading with such absolute delight. I can imagine no higher praise for any biographical work than the fact that it has not only confirmed the reader in his admiration for its subject, but has brought the man in all his motley nearer to one's heart. This assuredly Hesketh Pearson's *Bernard Shaw : His Life and Personality* has done for me.

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"He writes verra well. May be just as well as Barrie. But he hasna' got *that*," said Robertson Nicoll to me one day at Bay Tree Lodge, Hampstead, when we were discussing a new Scots writer who had given some promise of popular success with his first book, *The Humours of Glenbruar*. "That" was a snap of middle finger and thumb.

Most of us must have had the experience of reading two different authors on the same or a similar theme, and in exercising our critical faculty we have found it difficult to determine wherein A wrote better than B, or to what extent the characters A portrayed came more vividly to life by his method of presenting them, and yet we could be in no doubt that A possessed a quality of universal appeal and sympathy to which B, with equal talent and artistry, could not aspire. Nicoll's snap of his fingers and his "that!" offer as good a description as we shall get of this elusive quality. Perhaps it is somewhat akin to that other and even more universal quality in a widely different relationship, described by Mrs. Elinor Glyn as "it". I believe she gives it a capital "I".

Well, having had a request for a "Sussex chapter"—that being the sole editorial injunction—I find myself trying, at the outset, to answer the question that arises in my own mind as to what exceptional qualities Sussex possesses to make it one of the favourite counties of England. And although the first answer that suggests itself is as indefinite as "that!" only a little reflection is needed to realize that there is a multitude of reasons why Sussex should stand pre-eminent among the counties of England.

I remember when, towards the close of the First Great War, I had the opportunity of making my first aerial flight to France, starting from Kingston-on-Thames, how astonished I was to observe the remarkable way in which Surrey, Sussex and Kent seemed to differ from each other. They were almost as distinctive to the observer from the aeroplane as they are when separately coloured on a map of England. It may be that the local varieties of agriculture in each of these counties, determined by their peculiarities of soil, have resulted in the contrasting aspects which they present in a bird's-eye view. When one looks at the maps of some of the later-settled countries of the world, especially those of the western hemisphere, and notices how the counties and

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provinces have been determined by drawing a straight line from one point to another, so that they are merely arbitrary divisions of territory, one is the more in love with our age-old counties that have come into being in the slow process of years by merit of their own qualities, their natural features, as part of the jig-saw lay-out of the land.

It is only natural that the natives of a county containing so much beauty of woodland, hills and the sea as Sussex, should be proud of their homeland; yet—though I have made no attempt to verify my impression—I think it probable that within the confines of this particular county the native-born are in the minority. Those who most valiantly stand up for Sussex, ever ready to sing her praises, are apt to be what the older natives call "incomers". I am one of the many thousands who answer to that description, and answer with a sense of being an intruder in presence of the native-born.

Its nearness of approach to the metropolis has made Sussex, even in competition with the opulent beauty of Surrey or Kent, first favourite with Londoners in search of recreation or retirement. And from end to end of the county one has, in following its main-travelled roads or its leafy byways, a strong sense of peaceful and prosperous life.

Probably the least industrial of the greater counties, along its coasts from Rye to Selsey Bill and inland to its beautiful and historic northern capital of East Grinstead, with far stretches westward to Midhurst and eastward to Winchelsea, it encloses a large population upon whom fortune has smiled not too rarely, and many on whom she has smiled almost too often, if one may judge by its unnumbered mansions of the opulent set in the pleasantest parklands to be seen anywhere in the world.

Since my own adopted corner of seaward Sussex became a section of Britain's Front Line in the struggle for the right to live here in our own peaceful ways. We have had the pleasing illusion of time marching back, with the occlusion of motoring and the revival of cycling, but . . . even as I write these words my library in the apple orchard is shaking with the nearby gunfire from mobile batteries and the sound of bombs along the not distant shore was heard a little while ago! Yet not on these things is my mind set, resolutely it turns to the peaceful days we knew and the peaceful days we hope to know again no matter in what way they may differ from the days that were.

When first I settled on the Sussex coast almost a score of years ago and chose a home whose turret housed my library with windows

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that gave a superb cyclorama seaward across the Bay of Pevensey as far as the East Cliff of Hastings, and landward from the Downs, that die away at Beachy Head, towards the rising heights of Heathfield, I formed all sorts of nefarious designs on Sussex lore, as becomes the writing man. At this desk of mine I was happily to employ myself in the writing of many a new book that would have for its theme some aspect of Sussex life or Sussex history. What joyous days of summer wanderings I promised myself, what fruitful evenings of descriptive writing to follow! *My Window in Downland.* I would gather into that the best of the many articles on Sussex that I was to write. *The Downs from End to End* was inspired no doubt by Conway's *The Alps from End to End*: thus comparing small and lovely things with great and awesome. And a proper comparison, too, when I recall Chesterton's observation that it is the little things we best can love rather than the big. I could certainly have a greater affection for Mount Caburn, that grassy height behind the village of Glynde, mere pimple though it be compared with Mont Blanc or Aconcagua, for neither of which can one pretend any feeling of affection, though I have often gazed on both with awe and wonder.

But just about that time there set in such a spate of Sussex books, covering every nook and crannie of the county and its ways of life that, having made another resolve, to collect Sussex books as well as to write some, I found it hardly possible to keep pace with the reading of the volumes, as they streamed from the press, for when I look around my collection of Sussexiana today I am all too conscious of its shortcomings.

In the face of this flood of Sussex literature I retired abashed. Who was I, a mere incomer, to swell it? If I have written no book about Sussex, however, not even an essay on the county, that is because I have been happily busy living in it, and to enjoy and admire the beauties and charms of nature is almost as good as to write about them. Still, even now, I find myself day-dreaming about books on Sussex that I fain would write, but know I never shall. Some day, perhaps, should it be my fate to lie beneath Sussex soil, there may be a line upon my headstone: "He never wrote a Sussex book."

All the same, I am envious of those who have had the urge and, in addition to rejoicing in the satisfactions of Sussex life have had the time and energy to write about it. With most of their writings I am familiar, but this must not tempt me to a dissertation on Sussex books and writers, though in the last twenty years no other county

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of England has proved such a literary lure to authors living in it. There is one book, however, that no one mentioning the subject of Sussex and its literary appeal can possibly fail to note, and that is E. V. Lucas's *Highways and Byways in Sussex*.

I feel sure it is not because my latterday affections for any particular region of England have anchored me here that I admire this volume above all others that I have read in that famous series. It has been my good fortune to live in other counties of England which, for historic association and natural beauty, are certainly not unworthy of comparison with Sussex: I refer especially to Warwickshire and Nottinghamshire.

But I know of no book dealing with any of the English counties that has the charm of Lucas's *Sussex*. Yet here again one has to ask oneself the question whether the author shall receive all the credit for the charm of his work, or whether we must make some allowance for the rich interest and charm of his subject.

As the editor of I know not how many encyclopedias, I have received letters from critics who complain that, having found in the three-line paragraph about their own village an error of the grossest kind in the statement that the parish church dates from 1433, whereas all the world knows it dates from 1432, they have no confidence in any of the other 84,999 alleged statements of fact contained in my encyclopedia, and would like to return the ten volumes and have their money back—as one whom such criticism galls, even after thirty years, I am glad to be able to accept, in the best of faith, all Lucas's statements of fact and fancy about his beloved Sussex, albeit one touching my own neighbourhood is singularly wide of the mark. "West Dean," he tells us, "is just a farm yard, with remains of very ancient architecture among the barns and ricks." The truth is that not many spots in Sussex have so much of interest to offer in so small a space. Lucas could never have been there when he called it "just a farm yard".

Farm yard, indeed! Not only does it possess a treasure in one of those "lost little Downland churches"—though here I rather drag in Kipling's lovely phrase for the sheer pleasure of writing it, as no little Downland church is in less danger of being "lost", since it catches the eye of every traveller 'twixt Seaford and East Dean, lying openly in a wide umbrageous hollow of the Downs and conspicuous with its orange lichened roof. Not less conspicuous than the church is the fine old thirteenth-century rectory to the west of it, whose roof of old Sussex slate also shows orange-golden against the surrounding green.

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The strange thing is that neither church nor rectory could have been known to Lucas, when he wrote his *Sussex Highways and Byways*, and if he did discover them before he died in 1938 he must have had a thrilling surprise. In the quite inadequate index to his delightful book—every journalist ought to protest against inefficient indexing—the name of West Dean is not even mentioned. And yet a whole volume might be written about this quaint little hamlet. It has centuries of history and romance up its sleeve. There are grounds for thinking that here was King Alfred's " palace of Dene " and that a mile or so away Alfred assembled in the estuary of the Cumbermere, now largely silted up, those little ships of his which comprised the first flotilla that grew into the mighty British Navy.

At no time in its history had the hamlet a population that could have exceeded a hundred or two, but there were times when that entire population was wiped out by a malarial fever peculiar to the little vale until, more than two hundred years ago, one of the Heringods, who owned the place for generations and had their mansion there (nothing but fragments of its vast dovecot endures), by planting trees that absorbed the humidity so abolished malaria. To that, and not to the indiscriminate hand of nature, does West Dean owe its leafy charm today.

It was in West Dean churchyard that I first saw an adder—a good two foot long—slithering among the recumbent stones and, by the way, there are several massive gravestones to the Allfreys, the latest lords of the manor, whilst within the church itself is an elaborate, if slightly ornate memorial to the Armigers, who were the big folk of this little place more than three hundred years ago. " Just a farm yard," forsooth !

Sussex commands our respect and awakens our interest in a great variety of ways : from having preserved the remotest type of prehistoric Briton in that fragmentary skull at Pilt Down to Glyndebourne Opera, and incidentally 1066 and all that ! " The Conqueror's Coast " it used to be named in railway advertisements before the War. But happily those Martello towers that punctuate the coast eastward from the foot of the Downs at Eastbourne are there to remind us that if Napoleon had attempted his threatened invasion he would have found no Englishmen of that day ready to be conquered. And though the airborne Hun has hit hard upon its seaside towns none of Hitler's men have landed there except to become prisoners.

Another railway slogan once familiar to my readers runs : " The Sussex coast, where the sun shines most." And that Sussex sun-

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shine is accountable for marked longevity among the inhabitants of certain of its coast towns. In Eastbourne nonagenarians were once common objects of the seashore and some of them might have gone on to score their centuries but for motor-bicycles and bombs. Each of us, however, will respond differently to the appeal of Sussex. Its antiquarian and literary associations engage me most readily, though I'm far from indifferent to its charms of nature, and especially is it endeared to me for three very simple things, which others might hold of small account.

It was on the Downs that I first fully realized the marvellous specialization of the hawk in its power of hovering in the sky; the beauty of herons in flight—often have I seen one flying alongside the train between Firle and Lewes where until recent years there was a heronry—and the masterly pace of hares across the bare and covertless slopes near Beachy Head. There, too, on the highway between East Dean and Friston have I spouted more than once Meredith's fine lines in the presence of their realization:

> Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweeping
> Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star.

Still, it's the literary interest that grips me most readily. Why doesn't someone with that leisure which eludes me write a book on "The Literary Landmarks of Sussex"? No matter how formidable Sussexiana has grown, that would certainly be an acceptable addition to it, nor will it ever be too great so long as that book remains unwritten. I shall risk the suggestion that Sussex is richer in literary memories than any other county in England: even than Warwickshire. I have not forgotten the sentimental moment when I stood by the grave of William Black, in Rottingdean churchyard, just two years after his death in 1898. Close by is that of Burne Jones, and a few yards distant from the churchyard the famous nephew of Burne Jones, Rudyard Kipling, had his home, from which the gaping tourists were so soon to drive him to the less accessible region of Burwash, where he lived from 1902 until his death. I often saw his farm carts in the Burwash neighbourhood, with the regulation name-plates, announcing the world-famous author as their farmer-owner.

I suppose nobody reads William Black today, not even in his native Glasgow, though he was once as popular as Arnold Bennett in a later day—where stands Arnold Bennett now? Black's appeal was made to a quiet old world that is dead and deeply buried beyond exhumation. The Scots' novelist had lived at

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Brighton; many years earlier that strange genius and more memorable man of art and letters, William Blake resided at Felpham, near Bognor, Edward Gibbon's life at historic Sheffield Park would make a good chapter in that book I have suggested, while both Richard Jefferies and W. H. Hudson have, in their writings about the Sussex scene, endowed the literary topographer of this later day with rich material for comment and quotation.

Old Cobbett was essentially of Surrey, but his *Rural Rides* took him all over Sussex, and there was another of the same vigorous breed in Tom Paine, author of *The Rights of Man*, who lived and wrote for years at Lewes, in the latter half of the eighteenth century. A philosopher of very different calibre and more recent times tried "Dr. Brighton" during his "decline into invalidism", Herbert Spencer, while Darwin wrote part of his *Origin of Species* at Eastbourne, where Professor Huxley spent the last years of his life at his home "round the corner" from my own window in Downland.

Perhaps the most completely literary of Sussex's once celebrated "incomers" was the American, Henry James, whose lovely old house at Rye which I so envied him was afterwards occupied by another literary celebrity of our time, E. F. Benson, but recently dead, famous in his young days as the author of *Dodo*, with which few of the present generation are likely to be familiar.

When I used to motor over to Hurstmonceaux (happy, happy days of no petrol restrictions) I always recalled Augustus J. C. Hare and his voluminous *Memorials of a Quiet Life*, at one time a subject of much discussion among literary folk, today deader than yesterday's mutton. His relative, Julius Hare, of *Guesses at Truth* fame, was the rector, and Augustus spent much of his youth in that scene of rural loveliness.

Meredith,—how many true blue Meredithians are surviving?—about whom thirty-five years ago I wrote a book that had absorbed my leisure hours through five years, once lived (in a borrowed house) at Seaford where in 1855 he wrote *The Shaving of Shagpat*. That town for full seventy years was the most depressing watering-place in Sussex, but just on the eve of the War was shaking itself from its long sleep of shabbiness into a brighter new life, only to be thrown back awhile in common with so many Sussex sea-towns by the visitations of the sneak raiders.

If anybody ever does essay that book on the literary landmarks of Sussex there are scores of alluring names all in some way or other associated with the county to engage him beyond the few that I have

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so casually named: Hilaire Belloc and Sheila Kaye-Smith differently pre-eminent among living writers; Charles Lamb, Shelley, Dickens, Thackeray, Francis Thompson of the unforgotten past. . . . But, heavens, all this in pursuit of "that!" By no means sure that I have made my point, save that I may have evinced some measure of affection for that corner of England where, with due deliberation, I made my home nearly a score of years ago and where, when the Hitlers have ceased from troubling and the Goerings are at rest I hope to see the bomb-scarred towns of my happy yesterdays restored to a new loveliness of life. . . . And when my own sun is declining may I once again be looking out on the "far resounding sea" from that window in Downland!

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WILL SHAKESPEARE LIVE ?

"A WORLD without Shakespeare is unthinkable." Thus a literary friend of mine who delights in sweeping statements that sound well and make the unreflecting exclaim "How true!" The bolder these affirmations the farther from the truth. From the beginning of human life until the year 1564 may have been anything between fifty thousand and a million years. There was no Shakespeare all that time! Yet glorious ages of culture had been witnessed in the East and in Europe. A world without Shakespeare is not only thinkable: it has been and it will be. His own countrymen were perfectly content to go on without him. For more than a generation he was as dead to England as Marie Corelli is today or Arnold Bennett will be tomorrow. Some pertinacious Germans rediscovered him for his countrymen and for humanity.

The British love their Shakespeare so devotedly that they will not crowd to witness his immortal dramas in the theatre unless these are presented as spectacles on an elaborate stage. They do not object to see them in beautifully bound volumes whose gilt backs look effective on bookshelves, where they are often content to leave them. Being compelled at school to learn *The Merchant of Venice* or *King Lear* together with vulgar fractions, vast numbers of readers acquire a distaste for our greatest literature and turn gladly to the writers who deliberately cater for the tuppeny libraries . . . writers by the score who have each a score of novels to their names, yet not one of them had I ever heard of in a recent examination I made of that class of reading matter. A world without Shakespeare! Why, the English-speaking world exists already largely with that lack. Save that in the daily exchange of educated talk and wherever good English is being written the inexhaustible fount of his wisdom is still drawn upon and the unmatched utterance of his thought is used to enrich a weaker medium, to what extent does Shakespeare for the generality of folk make their individual lives and the world they exist in different today?

I should like to see a hundred men and women being asked by a sort of Gipsy Smith evangelist of literature in the Albert Hall to confess how much of Shakespeare they had read in any one year since the last War. Most of them would have to say that apart from a tear-off calendar with daily thoughts from the immortal bard they had not consecrated much time to his works this year. Yet literary

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enthusiasm has its dangers no less than literary indifference. Some of my readers may have forgotten that in 1784, when only in his seventeenth year, William Henry Ireland, son of a London dealer in old books and prints, began to produce a delightfully successful series of bogus Shakespearean manuscripts. Legal documents, letters, sonnets and eventually a complete play were forged by this boy and palmed off on the learned men of the day as the work of William Shakespeare, whose signature Ireland could write better than the dramatist himself. The play was named *Vortigern*. Sheridan put it on at Old Drury with Kemble in the cast, on April 2, 1796. Unfortunately April 1 had not been available! The great Samuel Parr, the poet laureate Warton—both of them more influential in their time as critics than any that England boasts today—accepted all these forgeries as the genuine work of Shakespeare and I do not doubt that, had he not happened to die a few years earlier, even the great Cham of English Letters would have given the young forger his ponderous approval. So much for the higher critics.

To my thinking, Shakespeare's works rank with the books of the English Bible in their inexhaustibleness, their enduring freshness of appeal at the sixth or seventh re-reading as at the first. And one can well believe Macready when he confessed after his farewell performance of Hamlet that he had constantly found new depths of meaning in Shakespeare's words through all his hundreds of appearances as the Prince and even in that final representation he had detected a subtle beauty which had previously escaped him. Seldom through long years have I let a month or two pass without some reading of Shakespeare, and even since Herr Hitler so completely upset the even tenor of my way and forced me to work as hard as I had done fifty years before, instead of resting at eventide, I have read again most of Shakespeare with keener enjoyment than ever. It happens that my two Shakespeare readings this month have been *King Lear* and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Why? Well, I found so much satisfaction in Donald Wolfit's interpretation of the noblest of Shakespeare's creations that I had to re-read the text with great care and increased admiration for the rare performance I had witnessed at the St. James's. I have no recollection of seeing any Shakespeare character embodied on the stage with such intellectual and physical appropriateness. Not even inadequate support could detract from that performance. The more one studies the play in detail the more the need for a national theatre appears, as only a galaxy of the finest actors and actresses could give balance

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to its production. *Antony and Cleopatra* I took up first merely to locate those famous words of Antony's

> Unarm, Eros: the long day's task is done,
> And we must sleep,

but fell to reading the whole again, perhaps to intensify a misty memory of Mrs. Langtry's production of which nothing but its spectacular element seemed to remain. What a superb work of dramatic genius is *Antony and Cleopatra* and what another plea is here for a national state-supported theatre! That is one of the things that must come when we have settled with Hun and Jap.

But that is a digression. Returning to the point, the farthest thing from my mind, however, is to show sympathy with those who are ready to sneer at the man Shakespeare as the impossible author of the plays which bear his name, or those who, like my friend aforesaid, can never speak of the plays themselves without making heavy inroads upon the stock of superlatives in English speech. Every time I re-read anything of Shakespeare's I feel that way myself. But when I put the question: "Will Shakespeare Live?" I do so in all seriousness.

It is worth considering for a moment what is meant by "living". I once read an essay by Inge in which, while taking his stand upon the symbolism of the Bible, he accepted without a qualm Sir James Jeans's 1,500 million years as the present age of the earth and the thousands of millions of years of further life which that brilliant scientist has promised our old planet. Dr. Inge, whose ability to reconcile biblical statement with scientific speculation shows a mental nimbleness not usually associated with those who have been Deans of St. Paul's, is quite prepared to believe that in a million years from now mankind will have made some considerable progress beyond its present mental state. So far as our finite minds are concerned a million years, which in the unimaginable largeness of time is but the twinkling of an eye, offers as good a notion of eternity as any longer period that might be conceived.

No man in his senses can suppose that in a million years from now Shakespeare, or Dante, or Sophocles, or Aristotle, or any single name we know identifying great intellects that have endured the contemptibly brief hour from the days of Homer to those of Bernard Shaw, will live in the minds of future man. Such undreamed-of efflorescences of genius will appear and disappear in the next million years that a hundred Shakespeares, a thousand Aristophanes, and ten thousand Shaws will have vanished as effectively as the gnats

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that live their infinitesimal fraction of time before our eyes. It is highly improbable that even books will be familiar things in a million years from now. So that when we hear the highbrows talking blandly in their Bloomsbury coteries about the certainty that this great novelist of today will "live" and that young poet will be articulate in ages to come, just let our thoughts race forward for a moment to that distant time in which the once Gloomy Dean is evidently prepared to believe mankind will still be Christian and possibly still listening to a preacher at the thousandth New St. Paul's. All that can be said with any sort of warranty of common sense is that Shakespeare will probably continue to interest a diminishing public for a few centuries longer, until he and the whole body of English literature, English culture, the English race itself have faded into the dim background of a life whose manifestations not the most imaginative amongst us can begin to guess at.

Meanwhile, for the only possible conditions of sanity, and our personal happiness in a social world, we have to go on living as though little things were great and the activities of the literary world really did matter. It is the only way to get any fun out of life. We mustn't let Sir James Jeans and his monstrous billions of stars—sixty for every living creature!—and millions of billions of years of time and a Sun for every blade of grass on the face of the Earth, make us feel that we are the maggots which we can be proved to be in our relativeness to the universe. Rather let us quit ourselves like men and cultivate a sense of our importance. To which all the babble of Bloomsbury is rather helpful than otherwise. It is quite exhilarating to speculate upon the immortal possibilities of our writers of today, our Shaw, our Wells, our . . . Who else is there? Nobody is any the worse for it and it merely adds to the illusion which we call life.

Thus I am not ill-disposed even toward the anti-Shakespeareans who periodically resume the chasing of these old hares of cryptogram and Shakespeare's illiteracy. In my youth I was as bigoted and intolerant as Sidney Lee himself in my attitude to the Baconites and, indeed, to all who sought for the works of Shakespeare another author than their traditional begetter. But I now incline to think it is only fair to admit that although these doubters may have bees in their bonnets, they have since the days of Delia Bacon expended an immense amount of ingenuity in their propaganda, and have helped not a little to maintain interest in the authorship of the group of works, neglected as literature by their own writer in his lifetime, which form the apex of the literary achievement of the English

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race. And mention of Delia Bacon reminds me that she ended her life, soon after she wrote her famous *Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded*, in the asylum.

Of all the stupid objections urged against Shakespeare as the author of the plays that bear his name, it was left to a director of the Australian National Art Gallery, by name Bernard Hall, to advance the stupidest. He argued that Shakespeare, in the very few instances where copies of his signature have been preserved, spells his name as Shakspere, whereas in all printed references to the author of the plays the name is usually spelt Shakspear (or with the final e). An American once wrote a book on the name of Shakespeare and supplied no fewer than four thousand different ways in which it might be spelt! In Shakespeare's time it was no uncommon thing for even educated persons to spell their names differently at different times. Although it is a mere matter of three hundred years ago, spellings of not only proper names but of everyday words, were then subject to variations of taste and usage. No argument at all can be based upon discrepancies of this sort. As a matter of fact, however, it is arguable that one if not two of Shakespeare's autographs might be read with the spelling which his own contemporaries favoured. What has always seemed to me a curious thing was that the poet wrote so vile a fist in these autographs. That he should have written all his plays and the *Sonnets* in such a palsied style of caligraphy makes one marvel that the actors ever were able to get a clue to their parts. The copyists at the theatre must have been singularly skilled in reading the dramatist's handwriting. But really, from the very little that we can learn of Shakespeare's schooldays, we know enough to believe that he had at least as good an education, not only relative to his own time, but to that of some of our most successful and most respected living novelists. Churton Collins made out an excellent case against Ben Jonson's "little Latin and less Greek" for young Will Shakespeare's having, thanks to the Grammar School of his native town, acquired a quite efficient knowledge of Latin, by means of which he had access to the Greeks from whom he borrowed. The notion of Mr. Bernard Hall that when the young man came up from Stratford to London, and eventually became connected with the theatre, he found there in some old chest the manuscripts of the plays which he did no more than revise and adapt, is quite sufficient to make Sir Sidney Lee turn in his grave.

It is certainly to the credit of the Baconians that every now and again they break out either in England or America, or as more

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recently in Australia, to recall the world to the plays of Shakespeare even if they seek to father them on another. And the finest counter-blast ever administered to the advocates of the Bacon cipher came from no less an authority than Bernard Shaw. When he was lecturing at Birmingham away back in 1904, he illustrated the absurdity of the cipher theory by taking the titles of Shakespeare's plays—just a sufficient number for the purpose—and arranging them so that the fourth letter from the end of each title read downwards spelt " Bernard Shaw". Here is how he worked it out :

MacBeth
Julius CaEsar
Comedy of ErRors
Merchant of VeNice
Antony and CleopAtra
Two Gentlemen of VeRona
Merry Wives of WinDsor
Troilus and CresSida
Timon of AtHens
Antony and CleopAtra
All's Well that Ends Well

Now that seems to me the very sanest sort of criticism and did probably more good to silence the followers of Ignatius Donnelly at that time than all the invective of Sidney Lee.

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OF TWO DOGS IN PARTICULAR

THE only time that I saw Sir Nevile Henderson was in the early days of the War just before he had published *Failure of a Mission*, or it may have been its appearance that was the occasion of his being entertained by the London Press Club. I came away from that luncheon party with an impression (as I recorded at the time) of a personality of singular charm but tragically unsuited to the mission in which he had so conspicuously failed. All that is implied by "an English gentleman" Sir Nevile was; more indeed, for his lucid intelligence, his fresh humour, his shrewd eye for character as these came through his frank and finely phrased speech were qualities that would have made any Englishman stand out from the ruck of his compatriots. But he showed also a marked gentleness of nature that set some of us who were present moralizing on the world calamity that had put him up for two of the most critical years of history as the plenipotentiary of democratic Britain to pit his wits against the harsh and bloody-minded gangsters of Nazi Germany.

Almost the last thing Sir Nevile wrote before his too early death in the summer of 1942, overwhelmed, it may have been, at the historic "failure" which had ended a long and brilliant career in diplomacy, was a tiny book, *Hippy: the Story of a Dog* (with *In Memoriam* as sub-title), which did not reach the public before his own *in memoriam* had been written by countless pens in the world's press. As a dog-lover I was an early buyer of a copy of *Hippy*. If it may not take a high place in doggy literature that must be attributed less to the literary skill of the author than to the somewhat unlovable nature of his pet: a dachsbracke, being a cross between a dachshund and a small Bavarian bloodhound. We all love our own canine pets and are apt to resent any lack of affection shown to them by friends and acquaintances who have not lived on our terms of intimacy with them. Although without any envy of ownership, having enjoyed the friendship of many dogs other than my own, I am persuaded from my reading of Sir Nevile's story that Hippy and I could never have had any reciprocal affection, nor does his master claim for the creature any appreciable measure of canine charm. The snapshots that adorn the book show a sulky-looking and not very elegant animal in which the outward features of the dachshund predominate, but one gathers from the story that it was Hippy's sporting qualities that endeared him to his

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master for whom he certainly evinced no embarrassment of affection. Sir Nevile, whose interests outside of the engrossing affairs of diplomacy were huntin', fishin' and shootin', adored him for his passion to track game and to bring down young roedeer. His great dexterity in climbing mountains on his little stumpy legs in pursuit of quarry must have been worth watching.

Hippy was certainly a tough little devil, as one of his many adventures proves. Totally fearless of heights, he thought nothing of toddling along a narrow ledge of masonry, on the third story of the hotel at Bled in Slovenia where the headquarters of the diplomatic body in Yugoslavia were set up every summer, and when it happened through the carelessness of a servant that Hippy in hastening from the ledge to the window balcony for a meal awaiting him, was knocked over and fell " kerslap " on to the hard metalled road sixty feet below, we can imagine the horror of his devoted master. The dog was terribly injured, an unconscious bundle of bruises and broken bones. He was given a sedative consisting of " black coffee and brandy, with sugar and an aspirin dissolved in them " and rushed off with the Ambassador in his fastest car 150 miles to Zagreb where a veterinary professor had agreed by telephone to do his best to save the little chap's life. He had regained consciousness after the five-hours journey and as he lay on the operating table his master tried to soothe him while the professor (a genius in his line, for Hippy always had the best professional attention) examined him. Hippy's resignation to the ordeal seemed so uncanny that his owner asked whether he was really suffering pain. " He is suffering absolute hell, but he knows that he has had a bad accident and that we are doing the best we can for him. Animals," added the professor, " are much more sensible than human beings." Sir Nevile hardly dared to hope he would recover. Here is the happy sequel in the words of the author :

" About a month later I happened to get a chance of passing through Zagreb and went to the sanatorium to see him. All the staff who had attended the first examination were there expecting to witness a moving reunion. They witnessed nothing of the sort. Hippy's instinct had told him that I had not come to fetch him away and he was moreover deeply offended that I, his special property, had not stopped in the sanatorium to look after him. He marked his displeasure by treating me with the utmost coldness and almost indifference. It was an humiliating experience, for the others did not know my Hippy as I did. Exactly the same thing happened years later in 1939 when I went down to visit Hippy half way

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through his ghastly six months' quarantine in the kennels at West Hackwood in Surrey."

Years later Hippy was front-page news in the Argentine papers, when he had another adventure and a fortnight's search had to be made for him in the Pampa. His eventual restoration to his adoring friend then Ambassador at Buenos Aires was marked by the same indifference. This I can understand, as my own sixteen-year-old canine chum Angus, a tiny brindled Cairn, whose loss I was mourning just when *Hippy* was published, never let me out of his sight when I was about the house, but on returning in pre-war days from an absence of six weeks or more abroad he would show no greater delight than a wag of his tail, while his brother Ghillie, whom, alas, we have had to put to sleep this Derby Day, was jumping wild welcome to his mistress. Sir Nevile's report of the professor's opinion about dogs in pain leads me to mention that when my Angus was on the operating table (with which he had become too familiar in his last six months) being handled by a vet, for whom he had no marked affection, he proved, during a series of treatments for the removal of stitches and radium needles, the most willing and trustful of patients and whimpered only when the vet had to leave him for a moment in the hands of his assistants. In these respects only do I detect any likeness between Sir Nevile's dachsbracke and my Cairn. Had I been devoted to the blood sports in which Sir Nevile found surcease from his diplomatic anxieties perhaps Angus might have developed something of Hippy's hunting instincts, for when he was young he never saw a moving object from a chicken to an omnibus that he was not prepared to pursue, but I soon managed to cure him of this, and his long and happy life was spent in the pleasantest ways of peace.

In suggesting that dogs acquire some of the characteristics of their masters, I do not think this holds so true where the master subordinates himself to the dog. "Is thy servant a dog?" would not seem to have applied to Sir Nevile and Hippy. To Hippy one might more appropriately have put the question "Is thy servant an ambassador?" And Hippy would have said in Parliamentary language, could he have spoken, "The answer is in the affirmative". This biography of Hippy, the Hun dog, really reveals more about its writer than about his dog. And the impression it leaves, on me at least, is that it will be all to the good if the completely charming and socially-admirable type of diplomat personified by Sir Nevile gives place to a type more in touch with business life, the rough and tumble of commercial and political affairs. The shrewd Ameri-

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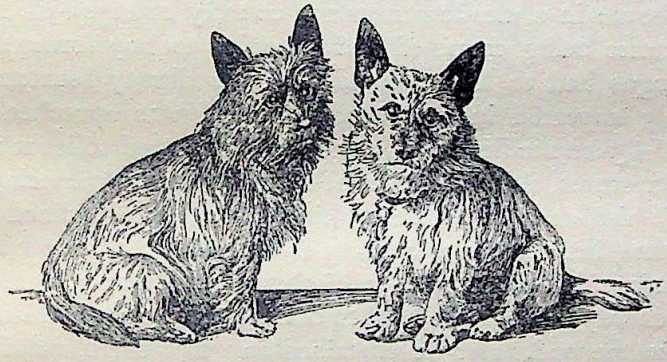
can business men, lawyers, newspaper editors, and the like, who have represented their country as ambassadors and ministers, have displayed qualities that are not engendered by departmental service in the Foreign Office.

However, *revenons à nos chiens*. I would like to add a few notes about Angus and Ghillie. If ever I write of them a book that has been long in my mind it will have to be, like *Hippy*, an *in memoriam*. I had hoped years ago to achieve such a book while our two little Cairns were still living subjects for my pen, for to the writing of



GHILLIE AND ANGUS.

books about dogs there should be no end. The Paleolithic men who, more than half a million years ago, succeeded in domesticating some wolf-like creatures as the progenitors of the dog, did far more for humanity than those latter-day inventors who devised the aeroplane. Incomparably. "A world without Shakespeare is unthinkable", said my friend. I have given my answer in another chapter. But a world without dogs is certainly inconceivable. Nor will such a world be until all living forms are perishing, the solid earth itself dissolving into meaningless waves of energy, and human life as we know it has ceased to be. Only when Man himself will be no more will his friend the Dog disappear.

I must, however, condescend from Dog to dogs; and two very tiny ones at that. No new discovery to me was the widespread interest in our canine companions which I found when I happened to mention in a weekly gossip column, which I began to write at the beginning of the War, certain incidents in the wartime life of my ageing "pups". I received from readers all over the Empire notes and stories about dogs and their ways. These two remarkable little entities (our own dogs are always exceptional) even had the

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honour of Xmas cards from admirers as far away as Takapuna, New Zealand. Two anecdotes only have I room for here, one about each of them, and naturally Angus comes first:

"Angus, my fourteen-year-old Cairn, is the funniest I have known. In his youth he had only to see a cow to rush barking at it. An elephant would have roused him to similar aggressiveness. In fact, when still a puppy he chased a motor coach across a Sussex common. But at fourteen years he is a changed dog. Yesterday it was my sorrowful task to superintend the bestowal of the furniture from my London flat (from which I have been finally blasted out) in an outhouse in a meadow near my country cottage—all London depositories being crammed and no offers to buy forthcoming—and Angus had to lend a hand. To my dismay fourteen cows suddenly appeared in the meadow and I was apprehensive of Angus. Quite needlessly. He showed a new and tolerant interest in the creatures, although most of them came with menacing looks towards him, and one Alderney, big with calf, was inclined to give him a toss, her great eyes bulging as she advanced upon him. But he calmly side-stepped her and others that threatened him, and made his way through the herd to one large cow that had lain down to chew the cud. Her he examined in great detail, pawing and sniffing her buttocks, critically nosing her udders, and even going up to lick her muzzle, when she seemed to breathe heavily on the little fellow, who retreated with a quick rearward movement, but no sign of fear. The comedy of this little affair somehow allayed the sadness I was feeling at my Pall Mall flat winding up in an old cowshed in Downland."

This is what I wrote of an incident in which Ghillie figured and which brought me no end of correspondence:

"Among other newspapers which I had thrown on my library floor one morning was *The Times*, which lay open at its editorial page, whereon is printed the little daily diagram showing the phase of the moon. Evidently the moon that night was going to be the slenderest of crescents, and the small square space in which the diagram is given was almost entirely black. One of my little Cairns, in toddling across the paper—to him, I suspect, *The Times* is "less than the dust"—was stepping over the black spot when he suddenly halted, backed a little, and scrutinized the spot carefully before continuing his passage across the room. The little incident looked much more amusing than the bald description suggests, but it did indicate that dogs can distinguish differences of colour value on a printed page, although I cannot imagine that

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even the most intelligent of them could ever be trained to recognize a portrait. Still, to notice critically a tiny black square might be the remote beginning of a comprehension which, with the necessary tuition, could attain to surprising heights."

What follows I wrote about them in July 1941 :

"My two little Cairns, Angus and Ghillie, have celebrated their fourteenth birthday this week. They are thinking of challenging comparison with Johnnie Walker, for by human standards they are now getting well on to the century, and are going strong. But not just so strong as when they were relatively octogenarians. They have been an unfailing source of interest, companionship and instruction to all of us in their immediate circle ; for they have seen to it that their position should always be at the hub. Two dogs of one litter could not possibly present greater contrasts of character. Angus—you would be surprised to learn how Empire-wide he is known because of my occasional references to him—is of the questing kind : all his life he has been looking each new day for some new enterprise. Ghillie has been a sedate little fellow, rather stand-offish and did not have his love of life greatly enhanced by having been brought to the verge of the grave by a vet. who gave him (many years ago : say sixty in canine relativity) one tablet of Easton's Syrup instead of a quarter ! The result of that was strychnine poisoning, and three anxious weeks during which his life hung by a thread, and an everlasting suspicion of the said vet. (one of the best in England, by the way) so that any new approach to his surgery (latterly bombed to rubble in a raid, of which I am sure Ghillie would have approved) used to produce a state of excitement and apprehension which we had difficulty in overcoming. Dogs don't forget any more than elephants do.

"But all who have known these pups (for we still call them that : they are so tiny) have been wrong in their estimates of them. By general agreement Angus, who used to be content with a few hours' sleep out of the twenty-four, would wear himself out long before his gentle, easy-going brother. Nothing of the kind. Of the two Angus has passed his fourteenth birthday with higher colours than Ghillie. Which just supports the old saying that it's better to wear out than to rust out. Ghillie is showing signs of deafness, and, like his master, he doesn't see as well as in his prime. I can detect no falling-off in any of Angus's faculties : he is often as lively as he was in his puppyhood. But again like his master—he finds in sleep 'nature's sweet restorer', which both of them had little need of until they had passed the grand climacteric. But

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Ghillie now is 'old and grey and full of sleep'. And in wishing them a happy birthday I feel that I'm not entirely unselfish, for all who are dog-lovers must know that when death lays his hand on a canine companion 'the old ashen rogue' takes away something of ourselves with him. In this experience I count myself singularly fortunate: a succession of no more than four doggie friends has seen me through nearly fifty years! And I don't count Ghillie in these four: he was never 'my' dog.

"As I do not like those who assure you that some experience of their lives has been so precious that you are to be pitied for not sharing it, I do not say to those who love not dogs that they have missed one of the great happinesses of life, for I'm sure they would not have appreciated any form of canine friendship, and they have no doubt had compensating interests, but to all dog-lovers I know I could go on yarning with sympathetic hearing about these two little Cairns (and especially 'my' Angus) indefinitely. Since all my readers are not dog-lovers I refrain, and merely register my gratefulness for the happy chance that brought them into my life. I know they will take away something from my happiness when they go, but nothing comparable with what they'll leave with me for remembrance."

It had been my hope that they would create something like a "record" by both surviving to celebrate their sixteenth birthday, equalling in terms of human life say 112 years! That was not to be. Nor was Angus to see his brother out. I am writing this on Derby Day, 1943, and we have just laid Ghillie in a little grave in the orchard within view of my library window at the end of a long path which runs under boughs laden with reddening apples. A little cairn of stones will appropriately mark their adjoining graves. A few more days and Ghillie would have attained that sixteenth milestone, but his weight of years made it clear that he was not likely to recover from a sudden and severe gastric disorder and although he had only begun to suffer, the divine needle of the surgeon and a squirt of some new water of Lethe gave him release in an instant of time. One felt that some day in a more civilized state of society it might be possible so to save human beings the horrors of dying when death was certain.

Angus underwent a heavy operation for malignant growth just before Christmas. We had hardly expected him to recover and his grave had been chosen. But he got well in a few days and was his old lively self for another three months. Alas, a friend of theirs who had joined our household a year before and was a favourite

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with everybody, a superbly strong and active Aberdeen, Funny by name and funnier by nature, not five years old, was suddenly stricken with paralysis when Angus was being operated upon and he —" funny " to the end—had become the first tenant of that little corner of the orchard now endeared to us as the resting place of all three. A day may yet come when I shall be able to celebrate their joyous little lives and those of their predecessors whom I see again all down the years whenever memory calls up the past.

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"OUR CLUB LIBRARY": A MEMORY

WHEN the salvage drive for old books and periodicals was at its height my mind went back with a touch of sadness to a certain West End club to which I once belonged, for it possessed a cosy library which, during my years of membership, I do not recall more than two or may be three other members using for any purpose but sleep. I felt that nowhere in the City of Westminster could so many tons of wastepaper be found in the same cubic space to swell the local salvage collection, and still I had a faint but lingering affection for that old-world room wherein I passed so many peaceful evenings reading and writing as though it had been my very own. Nonetheless, the "practical" side of my mind tells me that if most of its contents were to be carried off to the pulping mills at the moment of our acutest need for paper scrap, that old club library might be going to do a far, far better thing than it had ever done.

And yet it had served me well, as I hope to prove by way of explaining that tug at my heart. Among my old manuscripts stored in the country library, which, as I relate in another page, earned for me greater publicity than years of fruitful literary labour, I have just come across one of those written in that club library with the library itself as the theme.

Originally intended as a causerie for a series I had in hand appearing in *The Bystander*, I found that I had greatly over-written my space and only a portion of what I wrote was I able to print. On re-reading the full manuscript today, with the mental detachment which the passing of twelve years produces, I find myself as interested in the essay as though it had come to me from another hand, so I make no apology for including it in the present collection of my miscellaneous writings, as it may even have acquired a little "period" flavour in the years that have gone since the ink dried upon its pages.

"Library" is perhaps a euphuism. It resembles one only in so far as the shelves upon its walls are packed with books up to the ceiling. There is also a library ladder, for the use of cleaners on the rare occasions when the upper shelves are dusted. Never in the history of the club has a member been known to mount these steps in quest of any volume among the dim and indecipherable rows of the upper shelves. It is even a rare thing to see a member

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using the library for any purpose other than slumber. A large notice standing on the richly carved mantelpiece, "Silence by request", has no effect on the slumberers. Speech would, indeed, be preferable!

Our library is really something of a joke. If most of the volumes in it were of the dummy order, such as make a brave show in a theatrical "set," hardly anyone would discover the fraud. For the literary arts and graces are not more assiduously cultivated at this club than kindness to animals at a slaughterhouse. In some ways I like it the better for this. The bookman is well advised at times to escape from the too, too bookish atmosphere which pervades the "literary" club. Certainly in this particular club the facilities for such escape are numerous. Even the library itself, in the choice—or rather lack of choice—of its contents, seems at first glance to make no sort of appeal to a bookman. In its most conspicuous place stands a finely-bound set of *Ruff's Guide to the Turf* and another of *The Racing Calendar*. Mr. Edgar Wallace has made good dramatic use of the latter, and in these days when it

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seems possible to convert almost any printed thing into a play, I should not be surprised if he were to follow up his success of *The Calendar* with a stage version of *Ruff's Guide*. Naturally the entire series of the Badminton Library stands not far away from these evidences of the sportive life, and close by we have shelf upon shelf containing all the bound volumes of *Punch*: an alleged fount of laughter at which I have never yet seen a member refreshing himself. No fewer than six whole shelves are devoted to the bound volumes of *Notes and Queries*, dating from the issue of November 1849. It may be news to many that this antique publication, at one time edited by the famous dramatic critic Joseph Knight, still goes on noting and querying for the benefit of a small but excessively intelligent public. I cannot imagine, however, that any of my fellow members ever snatch a happy hour with one of these dry and dusty volumes.

But the bookishness of books will not be denied, and I find myself in this least literary of libraries discovering all sorts of interesting things. The shelves burdened with the *Annual Register* and the total run of *Notes and Queries*, and those supporting the dead weight of some sixty volumes of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, including the two volumes of corrigenda necessary to make that, the least accurate of all large modern compilations, approximately correct, funereal rows of expensively-bound magazines, such as *Cornhill* and *The Antiquary*, massive and unprofitable works of biography like Campbell's *Lives of the Chancellors*, histories such as Thiers's *French Revolution*, not to mention practically all the standard poets in forbiddingly old-fashioned editions—all these shelves seem specially designed to repel the lover of books. It is in quite unexpected corners that I have had my curiosity quickened. We have, for instance, an extraordinary lot of dictionaries. They run into scores, of all shapes and sizes, deal with many different languages, with slang and Americanisms, and include some early editions.

A good dictionary can laugh at the braggings of the best-seller of the day. There are dictionaries of which more copies have been sold than have been printed of *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Yet we seldom hear about them. A good dictionary is the Ole Man River of bookland: it just keeps rolling along while so many best-sellers flourish and decay and are forgotten. Looking into the club copy of Bailey's Dictionary I find that it is described as "the two and twentieth edition" and bears the date 1770 (twenty-eight years after Bailey's death) when it was published at the price of 6*s*. Under

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the entry "Lexicographer" I read: "A writer of dictionaries; also a harmless drudge." Dr. Johnson is usually credited with being the originator of this facetious description, but there is a doubt. I should like to see one of the earlier editions of Bailey's to discover whether Johnson took the definition from him, or a later editor of Bailey's pinched it from Johnson. An interesting point.

Our club library presents some quite amusing features as one makes its closer acquaintance. There are oddly assorted collections of modern writers such as Stevenson, Kipling, Hewitt, Meredith, Hardy, and O. Henry whose appearance suggests that they have found their way here as the result of sales or casual legacies. Nowhere among the shelves is one conscious of a definite plan unless it be in the forbidding rows of the once famous Bohn's Library within whose dusty bindings the whole range of classical knowledge may be said to be as effectively disposed of as though it had been packed in coffins and reduced to ashes at the Golders Green crematorium. Retaining duskily the form of books, perhaps they discharge the humble office of filling the shelves as effectively as more readable works would do.

Modern books occupy a tiny corner only. They are an interesting lot, however, especially Sir James Jeans's *The Universe Around Us*, to which I often find myself returning although I read it through on its first appearance. I sometimes think as I look at the immense shelf-loads of unread books in my club library that few of them are likely to be read before they have been resolved into dust and become infinitesimal particles of radiation in that ultimate and cheerless eternity which Professor Jeans foresees, when nothing shall exist except radiation endlessly streaming—as Walt Whitman might have expressed it.

My chief entertainment has come from some old three-volume novels of the early nineteenth century which some member has evidently thought might be as well on our library shelves as in the dustbin. A perusal of a few of these (such as *Tremaine; or, The Man of Refinement*, and *De Vere; or, The Man of Independence*, by the same anonymous author) suggests that if the best living writers have not vastly improved upon the master novelists of a hundred years back, the ordinary novel of today is incomparably better both in construction and literary style. Among these century-old three-deckers I have been especially attracted to *Ada Reis, A Tale*, published by John Murray in 1823. It is one of the stupidest novels ever written. I was drawn to it by its dedication—"To Lydia White". Before I tell you why, let me illustrate the crudity of the story itself. The

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hero is a preposterous person whose superhuman feats of derring-do would not beguile the most unsophisticated schoolboy today. Much of the action takes place in Tripoli, and the writer—none other than Lady Caroline Lamb—who had never been there, quotes in an appendix immense chunks of descriptive matter from Tully's *Tripoli* as her authority for the numerous bits of miscellaneous information with which her narrative is interlarded thus:

"'You are not an Arab sheik (17)' said Ada Reis, looking steadfastly at him, 'the arms you bear, your belted girdle (18), and that dark *heiram*, cannot disguise you from me; you are a Jew, the Jew I am in search of. By the Prophet, you are Kabkarra!'—'Sayest thou so,' retorted the stranger and laughed."

One can hear that laugh only in memory. It would be of the "ha! ha!" variety whose last echoes died with the Surreyside melodrama. The numerals in the text direct the reader's attention to notes at the end of the novel. They must have been a patient lot of readers a hundred years ago. Lady Caroline Lamb, among the most eminent of the literary ladies of her time, is best remembered as one of what Félix Rabbe calls *Les Maitresses authentiques de Lord Byron* in his piquant book of that title, wherein Lady Caroline figures prominently. It would not appear that her relations with Byron improved any literary ability she may have had, as her novel is about as crude an effort in fiction as I have sampled. Here is a typical passage: "Dangerous it is for the young and the beautiful to take long voyages or long journeys together; side by side they are placed near to each other, and have greater opportunities of confidential intercourse than may fall to their lot during whole years at home. On board the vessel Fiormonda necessarily saw much of Condalman," and so on. How distant it all seems from our present-day notion of fictional narrative!

Concerning the dedication of *Ada Reis*, many years ago Robertson Nicoll wrote an essay entitled "Who was Lydia White?" and suggested that anyone who had not heard of Lydia was imperfectly acquainted with English literature. I have always deprecated these arbitrary "test questions". It is quite possible to have an extensive knowledge of English literature with only the vaguest notion as to who Lydia White may have been. I was intrigued, however, to read in the dedication: "To you, who, without paying undue deference to what is termed the world, have succeeded in retaining around you, even when sickness has rendered you incapable of exertion, many who are distinguished by superiority of intellect

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and literary talents, to you I venture to dedicate these pages." In Lockhart's *Life of Scott* you will find numerous references to her: andparticularly this entry in Scott's diary under November 13, 1826,

"Went to poor Lydia White's and found her extended on a couch, frightfully swelled, unable to stir, rouged, jesting, and dying. She has a good heart, and is really a clever creature, but unhappily, or rather happily, she has set up the whole staff of her rest in keeping literary society about her. The world has not neglected her. It is not always so bad as it is called."

Miss Lydia White has certainly her place in the social side of our literary history. If she was not in herself capable of any distinctive achievement her numerous friendships with the literati of the early years of last century will at least preserve her name for those interested in such matters. Possibly some American, after reading this, may hurry over to London to write her biography: No figure of English literary life, past or present, seems too insignificant for an American biography today.

One discovery for which I am grateful to my club library, is an introduction to Bulwer Lytton as an essayist. His entire works fill one of the shelves. Although I seldom find myself inclined to re-read any of his novels with which I am familiar or to make a beginning upon any of those I have not read, I find his miscellaneous writings, such as *Caxtoniana*, very engaging. They exhale an agreeable personality, differing astonishingly from that which some of his biographers would have us accept. Some of the titles of these essays, which appeared originally in *Blackwood's*, are in themselves appealing. There is one " On the Increased Attention to Outward Nature in the Decline of Life", another on " Monotony as a Source of Happiness", a third on " Rhythm in Prose as Conducive to Precision and Clearness". On some three score of these subjects the great novelist has something which is illuminating to say, and it is said in a simple, forthright manner. If there is any lack, indeed, it is that "literary" flavour which one somehow expects in an essay more than in any other form of prose composition. What he says about rhythm is entirely to the point : " In every good prose writer there will be found a certain harmony of sentence, which cannot be displaced without injury to his meaning. His own ear has accustomed itself to regular measurements of time, to which his thoughts learn mechanically to regulate their march."

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LET'S READ POETRY!

THAT would make a good slogan just now. There are signs of a revival of popular taste in poetry, which may not be quite the same as a taste for popular poetry. But the important matter is that a slogan should be sounded when it is likely to be heard by listening ears. Originally the battle cry of the Highland clansmen, the word had long been appropriated by publicity-mongers on both sides of the Atlantic to propagandist uses in the cause of commerce, until the Second World War made the writing of slogans a great national industry. If no one ever saw the actual words as a slogan " Turn your Libraries into Pulp " the organizers of the great drive for paper salvage implied as much, and it is not improbable that a large proportion of the millions of books that found their way to the pulping tanks were volumes of unread poetry. For poetry has been a drug on the market for fifty years and more. The last of the poets who could be regarded as best-sellers was Tennyson; he died in 1892. Time was when Scott, Byron, Moore, Tennyson could each command for a book of poems fees that out-rivalled the best-selling novelists of their day and have not been exceeded by our latter-day novelists until the crazy competition of the film-fabricators came to swell their rewards to unprecedented, almost fantastic dimensions.

With the decline in the popular demand for poetry the 'nineties of last century were marked by a great extension in the publishing of " limited editions " of numerous poets and poetasters: the vogue of the minor poet had arrived. Nor has it yet departed, but is rather showing signs of increase. Scores of those whose books commanded attention at the turn of the century have been long forgotten or outmoded, only to be succeeded by many scores of newly-arriving candidates for the bays, whose names in the main will be as obsolete currency among readers fifty years on as those of the 'nineties are today. I shall pick out from the poets' corner of my library a volume by Richard Le Gallienne, one of the salient poets of the 'nineties who still endures. It is his *English Poems* (1893), but I am not here concerned with its contents, only its " end papers "; for in these I know I shall find the names of a number of poets now long forgotten. On a count there are twenty-one that would mean nothing to the ordinary reader today—absolutely nothing. But happily there are a few whose poetry will attract readers of taste for many

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years to come: Laurence Binyon, John Davidson, Francis Thompson, Katherine Tynan, William Watson, Oscar Wilde, a count which, with Le Gallienne himself, makes seven who fifty years after their appearance in those end papers are neither outmoded nor forgotten. Among those whom I have reckoned as forgotten are certain names that remain familiar to the student of letters; I have read some poetry by all the one and twenty, and suggest that there was none of these books of verse issued fifty years ago that wasn't worth reading then or now. A fifty-year-old favourite of mine is still to the fore and him I have included in neither of the categories, but reserved for mention as a personal preference. His name is Norman Gale, as popular a name as that of any of the poets introduced to the aesthetic world by Elkin Mathews and John Lane in 1893: *A Country Muse* and *Orchard Songs* were entirely delightful and their fragrance stays fresh in my memory as I write these notes in my garden library that juts into an orchard where the apples are reddening for a bumper harvest. If Norman Gale's muse was no high flier she was still one of the authentic sisterhood.

Now what have I learned by picking up that old Le Gallienne volume? This I suggest: that I am right in thinking the present day activity of the moderns is more significant than the vogue of the minor poets which marked the 'nineties. It is less adventitious, more an issue of the temper of the times, and by that token more important. Yet I prophesy that any publisher's list today that retains as much interest for the reader of 1993 as that one list of 1893 does for the reader of 1943 will be worthy of more careful elaboration than I have been able to give to the end papers of *English Poems*. And here I would explain that all this is by way of prelude to the re-consideration of certain books about poetry and collections of poems that first engaged me years ago and by recent excogitation in a newer light have led to some modification of my opinions. That, however, applies least of all to the first case I shall mention than to others that will follow. I have been looking again at Alfred Austin's long-forgotten volume of criticism, *The Poetry of the Period*, to see what the Poet Laureate, from whose brows the late Dr. Bridges, O.M., inherited his shop-soiled bays, had to say of the poets of seventy-three years ago. Knowing the work of Austin I was aware that this old book was not a good one; but if one read only good books, old or new, one might have too much leisure. Besides, a book that is contemptible as literature can still be either instructive or amusing.

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My copy of Austin's Venture in Criticism was thirty years old when I picked it up in Charing Cross Road, and it may be as many years since I last looked into it; but I find that I had annotated it very freely at the time. I am glad that my indignation with the writer revived at a re-reading. I should not wish to think that I was growing indifferent to the literary passions of my earlier years. And Austin, with his sleek self-satisfaction, his sniffing superiority as a critic, and his despicable performance as a poet, always irritated me. He was thirty-five when he wrote that scathing criticism of his immeasurably superior contemporaries. Who were they? Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, Arnold, William Morris, to mention five only from a shining scroll of fame that made even Charles Williams's list of living poets (Thomas Hardy had recently died) in his *Poetry at Present* look dull and lustreless. Yet a sorry lot in Alfred Austin's opinion. He did, however, anticipate the thirty-five-year-olds of our later day by putting Tennyson where most of them would place him: "among poets of the third rank," and "not even at the head of them!" Tennyson he said had "no height"; Browning, whom he deemed no poet at all, "no depth". Fused together they might have made a "two-dimensional" poet, to quote an epithet from Mr. Williams, whose *Poetry at Present* was an attempt to do for the poets of 1930 what Austin was doing for those of 1870. But this later critic does not give the poor wights so much gruel; he is more inclined to dish them out honeyed helpings.

Austin's chief complaint against his great contemporaries was their femininity. Swinburne especially. But was it "a feminine muse" that inspired Tennyson's *Fatima*, from which he quotes the following to illustrate another point?—

> My whole soul waiting silently,
> All naked in a sultry sky,
> Droops blinding with his piercing eye:
> I *will* possess him, or will die.
> I will grow round him in his place;
> Grow, live, die looking on his face;
> Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

Then all our poetry of passion, all our fiction of today that reveals a masculine understanding of the eternally feminine is inspired by a "feminine muse". And, when you think of it, isn't that the proper gender of the muses? The poetaster who could belittle Tennyson, whom, by an ironic fate (plus political intrigue)

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he followed in the Laureateship, had the effrontery to print reams of such trash as his own stanzas on Trafalgar Day which I clipped from *The Times* in 1909. Do these masculine verses stir your pulse? Can you feel any thrill after reading them?

Unto us faithful clings the Sea,
And from us asks no more
Than we to it should faithful be,
As in great days of yore.

It was really too bad of the Editor of *The Times* to let Alfred's official offerings go out to the world through his pages. One has difficulty in believing that such drivel was actually printed in Britain's leading journal since 1813 (when the Poet Laureate Pye expired), as the poetical expression of our national pride in the greatest of our naval heroes. But my favourite gem from Austin occurs in the first scene of the second act of *England's Darling*, his egregious effort to dramatise the life of Alfred the Great:

The hogs are nosing in the mast,
The tegs are in the fold,
The norland flakes are flying fast
And oh, 'tis nipping cold.

So let us to the steading slink,
Still trolling as we gang;
Now is the time for meat and drink,
So let the world go hang.

Bridges will be remembered among our Laureates as the strong, silent one, but his magnificent muteness (almost equalled by his successor) on all plausible occasions for an official ode was the very essence of great poetry by comparison with the twitterings of an Austin.

To my surprise I find a footnote in *The Poetry of the Period* which shows that its author had a glimmer of the stuff of poetry. He is countering a criticism of Robert Buchanan's (surely as good a poet as many that are being fussed about just now) in which that writer says of Whitman "thoughts crowd so thick upon him that he has no time to seek their artistic equivalent". A false view of Whitman's peculiar genius, to which Austin rightly retorts: "As if poetical thoughts did not always bring their artistic equivalent with them!—the thought and the form, or expression, being one." This is a simple truth which is being lost sight of by modern critics

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of poetry and also by the poets themselves, too intent upon form to bother about thought content. Emotional language is essential to poetry, but prettily polished phrases that cover a mental vacuum are the veriest husks of poetry. There is a present tendency to discuss the mere poetics of poetry without regard to the poem's content. T. S. Eliot, Edith Sitwell, C. Day Lewis, and many other living poets of distinction, write so much and so well "about" their art that one feels there are longish intervals when their muse is playing truant. If Shakespeare had frittered away as much of his time analysing his own and other poetry as those exponents have devoted to that somewhat barren pursuit we might have been the poorer by some of his best plays.

I confess to little patience with the poets who can glibly tell you how the trick is done. Few of the really great poets have ever been so well up in their technique as some of the lesser ones. Shakespeare probably knew less than Miss Sitwell or Charles Williams about iambics, anapaests, trochees and dactyls. And yet——! He merely happened to be born a poet, just as some persons are born golfers. Theorizing always follows achievement. The good golfer is induced to tell others how he makes his shots, whereupon he begins to invent theories to fit his practice. But the truth is that he has no absolute knowledge of how he obtains his results. There were poets before there were anapaests or iambics. Homer, I suspect, knew less about the poetics of *The Iliad* than Aristotle, who theorized about the poem four centuries later. Even T. S. Eliot has admitted in a recent lecture on poetry that he has difficulty in remembering the details of classical prosody and might (presumably) be at a loss to resolve a piece of English verse into its precise segments of feet and metre as established by the Greeks. No wonder, since English verse has little affinity with Greek and our modern poets are largely in revolt against classical models. This at least may be stated with assurance: the common reader of this or no other age past or to come can be induced to read poetry by means of a handy guide to verse forms. That is a matter for the practising poets themselves just as the clinical knowledge of the doctor must reach his patient in result and not in theory. Thus the slogan "Let's Read Poetry!" would make little appeal to the masses if it implied, as a condition of the reading, a knowledge of poetics. It is up to the poet to get himself across to his readers as it is to the actor with his auditors. Nor will the argument avail which postulates the need for the reader to bring a certain measure of culture and even of specialized knowledge to the reading of a poem if he

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would have full benefit of the poet's imagination. If the poet cannot express his thoughts in words that hold and charm the reader he will have to be content with "fit audience though few". But the discussion of poetry if it does not run on purely technical lines and concerns itself less, or not at all, with the minutiae of the poet's art than with the sensuous exhilaration of his words, the wisdom of his thoughts, is all to the good and essential to the fullness of one's reading life.

Myself I have rarely failed on any day through more than fifty years to read some poetry old or new. Never in any systematic way, let me add, unless I had some instant piece of writing to do concerned with a particular poet or with some aspect of poetry. For I find on reflection that I have not only read widely among the standard poets, but have also in more temerarious moods presumed to discuss the constituents of poetry. In the past two or three years I have felt myself drawn to the study of the modern writers with greater sympathy than seemed likely at my earliest acquaintance with them, and my recoil from these earlier contacts has given place to a rising interest and a sensible modification of old prejudices, something far short, however, from acquiring new lamps for old. Before I write down a word or two on some of the pleasure, perplexity and defatigation I have experienced in this approach to the moderns, I would recall a discussion on poetry in which I took a hand arising out of a surprisingly ill-informed contribution by Arnold Bennett written not long before his death. In this Bennett hurled at us a number of quotations from the ancients and the moderns and asked "Is that poetry?" I was strongly dissident on every point, although he found many to applaud him, especially a lady rejoicing in the charming name of Regina Miriam Bloch who said "Arnold Bennett's discourse on poetic values was brilliant and beautiful . . . Mr. Bennett's fine criticism raises that lost art once more to the level of Sainte Beuve and Walter Pater." Here indeed was matter for mirth, and the sub-editor who printed Miss Bloch's letter in displayed type was either a wag or a humourless soul.

We may doubt if Bennett, to whom most achievements in literature came as easy as swimming to a duck, had really got us back to Sainte Beuve in one swift hour of writing. Rather had he headed us upon a false track. Bluntly, his notion of poetry was quite wrong, or so it seemed to me. What he demanded of a poet is that he shall use language which is "beautiful, shining, splendid". In a stray quotation from Browning he did not find this, but no one

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that has read say ten per cent of what Browning wrote can possibly deny that this sort of language abounds in his poetry. Nothing is more futile than to quote stray lines from any poet, good or bad, and to ask the reader if this is poetry. Equally to choose some shining lines and with a gesture of finality say "*This* is poetry", helps but little. Even the worst of poets, for example the Montgomery of Macaulay's shrivelling scorn, could yield a line or two that might pass for poetry on this rough and ready method of illustration, just as the very best can supply us with examples of banality. It is really much easier to be a passably good poet than to be a moderately decent proseman. What we call poetry is the natural language of emotion—in the preface to his *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth defines it as "emotion recollected in tranquillity"—and I have known persons utterly deficient in literary sensitiveness express a deep and urgent feeling in good emotional language. In particular I remember having to report to a lady, whose poverty of words in ordinary conversation I had often noted, that a certain friend had died in circumstances which to her were emotional: stunned for a moment with the news, she merely said "How small a thing is life!" The reflection was entirely fitting in this particular instance and the half dozen monosyllables could not have been improved by an artist.

It seemed to me that there was a confusion of thought in Bennett's mind. He was among those who think that the poet's first business is to please the ear (in which T. S. Eliot would so far agree) rather than to aim at the utterance of thoughts that stir or stay the mind, or to fire the imagination with descriptions that are vivid because they are true. He quoted two lines from Irving Taylor's *Sacrifice*, the one—

Then with Hell's fury freighted, fell a star

and the other—

Unfooted wastes and vast unfathomed glooms.

And he correctly told us that "Milton might have written these lines", and that scores as good can be found in *Sacrifice* (a poem I haven't read). To which the obvious reply is that Milton did write these lines! Although we shall look in vain through *Paradise Lost* to find them, shall we not find hundreds on which they are modelled? All such lines are Miltonic. I could quote you many scores of lines from Bailey's *Festus* as good as those and none of them would have been written had not Milton shown the way.

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Similarly from Roy Campbell's *Adamastor*, which had as great a success as a work of poetry can hope to have in those days, Bennett took some entirely admirable lines assuring us that Campbell " will compete, and not unsuccessfully, against Byron, he will be Miltonic, Keatsian, Swiftian ". He did not say that he could be entirely Campbellian, which might be a quality ranking higher than any of those specified. Nor did he suggest that he could be Eliotian, which is an essential quality of T. S. Eliot, who is perhaps the most individual of the moderns. The individual voice, however strange it may sound at first hearing, is less liable to escape our consideration than the mannered or the imitative. For T. S. Eliot to be T. S. Eliot is vastly more important than for him to be Miltonic or Keatsian, or Yeatsian. One of my favourite poets, to whom I return again and again for both the vigour of his utterance and the emotional satisfaction of his words, probably failed to dominate his (and my own) generation chiefly because his poetry was too closely modelled on Wordsworth. I mean Sir William Watson, who in the matter of using language that is " beautiful, shining, splendid " will stand comparison with any other poet writing today or yesterday.

Like Bennett's my love of poetry was awakened in a time of accepted standards when Whitman still seemed a startling phenomenon and out of our long familiarity with the English poets from Chaucer to Hardy there grew up prejudices which at first stood firm against the innovators. Had Bennett lived a few more years—I am surprised to find that twelve have passed since his dying hours were front-page news—he might have come to a more tolerant understanding of the young revolutionaries who were at least being faithful to Milton in aiming at " things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme ". That is how I now feel towards Eliot and the various groups that have gathered force and importance where he had pioneered. But any attempt at an ordered study of our modern poets is at once beyond my powers and the scope of this desultory essay, though ten or fifteen years ago I contemplated a study of these newer writers as " Salute to Youth ! " and now they are nearly all *nel mezzo del cammin !* But I am still obstinately antipathetic to Eliot's masterpiece *The Waste Land* even at the sixth or seventh reading. I read it first soon after it was awarded *The Dial* prize in 1922. And confess that I once quoted its sixteen opening lines as prose, on the ground that they used up sixteen capital letters and took up unnecessary space if printed as verse, thus :

" April is the cruellest month, breeding lilacs out of the dead land, mixing memory and desire, stirring dull roots with spring

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rain. Winter kept us warm, covering earth in forgetful snow, feeding a little life with dried tubers. Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee with a shower of rain ; we stopped in the colonnade, and went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten, and drank coffee, and talked for an hour. Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch. And when we were children, staying at the archduke's, my cousin's, he took me out on a sled, and I was frightened. He said, Marie, Marie, hold on tight. And down we went."

And then in the words of Arnold Bennett I asked " Is that poetry ? " Although it is not the sort that he and I were brought up on, it may be worthy of the name. But it still sounds to me a little like the start of an unprofitable tale for a Keepsake annual of a hundred years ago, or the fountain head of a somewhat turgid stream of words that loses itself in a symbolic marsh. On its way it burbled thus in the concluding lines of a section called (I can't guess why) " A Game of Chess " :

> Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight.
> Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.
> Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night,
> good night.

Upon which piece of poetic realism Charles Williams remarks " many of his (Eliot's) readers must so have felt sounding within them the young freshness of lyric as they heard goodnights exchanged outside a publichouse, so near are we to both ". What about the old staleness of beer ?

And listen again to the poet in " The Fire Sermon ", another section of *The Waste Land :*

> O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter
> And on her daughter.
> They washed their feet in soda water
> Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole !
>
> Twit twit twit
> Jug jug jug jug jug jug
> So rudely forc'd
> Tereu

In such wise does the strange composition go on in varying metres, now rhymed, now extremely " free ", with cross headings that do not help towards elucidation until we come to the end which crowns the work :

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I sat upon the shore
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order ?
London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down
Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli 'affina
Quando fiam uti chelidon—O swallow swallow
Le Prince d'Aquitaine a la tour abolie
These fragments I have shored against my ruins
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.
Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.
Shantih shantih shantih.

Is that "poetry"? Well its maker was a professor of poetry at Harvard for a year, and no critic has written more lucidly than he on the principles of poetry!

I find the poem full of "difficulties" to which the poet himself confesses in his seven pages of explanatory notes (the whole work runs to seventeen) in his *Collected Poems* 1909–1935, and these are sufficient to prevent it ever becoming a favourite with the ordinary intelligent reading public. The poet's attitude to his readers is little short of insolent as he demands of them (in the poem and notes alike) a scholarly understanding of Greek, Latin, Italian, French and German and a ready ear for onomatopoeia! As the seventeen young Mormon widows whom Artemus Ward refused to marry said: "This is *too* much," and he replied "It's on account of the *muchness* that I beg to decline", so may the ordinary reader in search of poetry beg to decline the formidable task of wrestling with the polyglot symbolic verse of *The Waste Land*.

Eliot is perhaps the most perplexing of the more important moderns: his obscurity seems to me deliberate, puckish, in nowise consequential. For in some of his later poems, notably *The Dry Salvages*, there are many passages of great beauty and profound thought, and the whole is a work of perfection. His increasing preoccupation with the esoteric is seen in such imagery (or should we say philosophy ?) as—

Repeat a prayer also on behalf of
Women who have seen their sons or husbands
Setting forth, and not returning:
Figlia del suo figlio,
Queen of Heaven.

But Mary as the daughter of her son takes us into a region of

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metaphysics where the ordinary poet is diffident of penetrating. *East Coker* is informed with a comprehensible philosophy of life and may be read for its beauty and originality of word patterns. As a picture in a poet's eye, contemplate :

Now the light falls
Across the open field, leaving the deep lane
Shuttered with branches, dark in the afternoon,
Where you lean against a bank while a van passes,
And the deep lane insists on the direction
Into the village.

Little Gidding, too, is instinct with beauty and wisdom. For example :

What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from. And every phrase
And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
Taking its place to support the others,
The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
An easy commerce of the old and the new,
The common word exact without vulgarity,
The formal word precise but not pedantic,
The complete consort dancing together)
Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning,
Every poem an epitaph. And any action
Is a step to the block, to the fire, down the sea's throat
Or to an illegible stone : and that is where we start.

Could the poetic art be more concisely expressed in the true idiom of philosophic poetry ? I think not. What bothers me is that this most important of our modern poets so often (in my judgement) falls short of his own ideals. Who reads his sequence of *Burnt Norton*, *East Coker*, *The Dry Salvages*, and *Little Gidding* (each to be had in booklet form) has read the best of T. S. Eliot and in the process will know a stimulating spiritual experience beyond anything to be had from the ruck of " modern " poetry.

After which statement I feel that as a die-hard adherent of the " standard poets " on whose work I was nurtured, I cannot be altogether so old-fashioned in my taste, especially since I have had profit recently out of an oldish American collection of what I might call the early moderns (it includes *The Waste Land*) in a collection of *Prize Poems* edited by Charles A. Wagner. Such as Vachel Lindsay's " General William Booth enters into Heaven ", which

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sings itself splendidly in Salvation Army rhythms, or his " Chinese Nightingale ", charged with a wistful beauty, elusive and only partially communicated, but sincerely felt. Or Robert Frost's singularly moving narrative of the grisly-ghostly " The Witch of Coos " ; or Stephen Vincent Benét's " King David ", a delicious retelling of the Bible story enlivened with deftest touches of satire ; or Amanda Benjamin Hall's " Ballad of Three Sons ", powerful as narrative and deadly true in its knowledge of motherhood. Two of the sons are splendid fellows, the third a crippled imbecile, on whom perversely the mother lavishes her love. The two fine brothers meet sudden death, trapped upstairs in a fire caused by the idiot, while the mother strives only

to save the thing
She should have left to die.

In the log hut where the father starts afresh after the fire, and his wife with their idiot boy bear him company, he muses :

The half-wit fills his mother's days
Just as he used to do—
For fatherhood and motherhood
Are separate strange things . . .
My wife she tends the lad she saved,
And when he smiles, she sings.
My wife cries, ' Shame on your hard heart,
And you his lawful sire ! '
I answer her, ' I had two sons—
They perished in the fire.'
The mother's love is for the weak
She cannot hope to cure,
But the father's love is for the strong
Who make his stock endure.

Well that's poetry and not because it is written in the " shining words " which Bennett demanded but because it imagines or records emotional and dramatic truth in the simple direct manner of ballad poetry with no fantastic posturings. The Mediaeval balladists, like Thomas the Rhymer, were rightly called " makers " : like the Greek poets, they *made* things of beauty and truth. That is the poet's job. And the easiest way to write in language that is shining and splendid is first to make in your mind images of splendid and shining things. The language will come naturally to their expression. Think great thoughts and you will be a great poet. That's all that's

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in it! The trouble is that many persons and even quite excellent writers think that the approach to poetry is from the outside. That the words are something apart from the thought. Too often is it so in modern poetry. The words are there but they enshrine no thought and

Words without thought never to heaven go.

One could write many pages about this little book of *Prize Poems*, it is so suggestive of ideas, and contains so much of the real stuff of poetry. Many of the poets represented in it are unknown to me. All are American and with two or three exceptions all have something to say that is worth heeding. And yet the same collection offers the work of Wallace Stevens from whose " Pecksniffiana " I select this startling thought

" Which is real—
This bottle of indigo glass in the grass,
Or the bench with the pot of geraniums, the stained mattress
and the washed overalls drying in the sun?
Which of these truly contains the world?
Neither one, nor the two together."

In the House of the Muses there are many mansions, and no doubt those of us who still retain our reverence for tradition alongside a readiness to consider with patience the efforts of the innovators might feel none too comfortable in some of these mansions. That thought notwithstanding, I shall conclude by reiterating my slogan " Let's Read Poetry! "

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ARE YOU A GENIUS?

You never can tell! Judging by the number of new literary geniuses to whom we were being introduced every week until paper rationing impeded their discovery, the supply is inexhaustible. And think of all the other arts, sciences, and vocations with their present high birth-rates of genius! I am tempted to raise this question because I chanced recently upon some paragraphs of protest which I printed in the late 'nineties against the *Daily Chronicle's* policy, under H. W. Massingham's editorship, of finding at least one new literary genius every week. In those days the *Chronicle* was alone in its feverish quest of new genius; in later years our whole Press has been so ardently engaged in this jolly game that one used to grow dizzy trying merely to memorize the names of these latest stars.

But it is evident that genius is much commoner than I once thought. So common, indeed, that there are moments when the disquieting thought occurs to me that I may be one myself. Fortunately, I am usually able on these occasions to regain my equanimity by reasoning that I have never in my personal appearance or activities presented any peculiarities, so that if I am a genius I have been notably successful in concealing the fact. There are many secret geniuses of my acquaintance. They remind me of Perceval Gibbon, the brilliant story-writer, who, when we were discussing "secret vices" (*à propos* of the Billie Carlton case) asserted that we were all guilty of some secret vice. Himself, he admitted to being a secret teetotaller.

Seriously, I feel it would be worth while if someone with the time to spare conducted an enquiry into the literary prophecies of thirty or forty years ago, tabulating all the geniuses whom the critics then discovered, and compiling a record of their subsequent achievement. The result would, I think, reduce the headiness of the praise which is lavished upon the thickly arriving masterpieces of today. It is a pity we have no water-tight definition of genius. "The power of being a child again at will" goes just a little way to explain it. Even so it defines only one sort—the romantic; by no means the rarest. I am afraid I cannot in a phrase or two offer my reader in whose mind I may have raised some doubt about his kinship with genius, a satisfactory definition. He and I must go on comforting ourselves with the thought when we are introduced

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day by day to these wonder-folk, that we also may possess something of their magical essence, however secret we are about it.

If I have escaped the "collecting" fever I have also missed some chances of making unconscionable profit out of authors' manuscripts and first editions which I have happened to possess. I remember being told that H. M. Tomlinson's *The Sea and the Jungle*, my first edition of which I "lent" to a friend, had fetched as much as sixty pounds! You must be very nippy in selling these. Collectors' favourites alter as unexpectedly as the speculative counters of the Stock Exchange. Society in all ages has been attacked by the collecting mania. "Pride of possession" is a deep-seated human passion. Time was, no doubt, when the flint-quarrying magnates of the Sussex Downs used to outvie each other in their collections of eoliths and swanked about their unique arrowheads and stone-axes. Gibbon describes a crazy age in Rome when a patrician would sell a whole estate in order to buy just one table of a certain rare wood.

America has not yet beaten that; but the mania for collecting first editions and original manuscripts of modern authors attained to extraordinary lengths there not so long ago.

The manuscript of *Walker, London*, seventy-three octavo pages in all, and those of four other minor pieces by Sir James Barrie, only one of which has appeared in book-form ("The Inconsiderate Waiter" which makes Chapter VIII of *The Little White Bird*), were sold at Sotheby's for no less than £1,015. That may seem a lot for some two hundred pages of handwriting whose value is mainly sentimental, but it represents a lower average price than has been paid for other examples of the same author's calligraphy. A thousand pounds for sixty pages of a Barrie manuscript! Only by imagining the purchaser to be a person to whom a thousand is no more than a fiver to the likes o' us can we suppose the transaction to be rational. For it is as sure as anything in our uncertain life that a time will come when that same manuscript will find few bidders above a tenner. An intimate letter by any famous author is naturally valued immensely higher than the equivalent amount of his literary manuscript, so that £630 paid at the same sale for a one-page letter by Robert Burns did not strike one as disproportionate in view of latter-day values. But the irony of it! Twenty pounds might have saved the poet's life in his last illness and prolonged his years, yet this single sheet of paper, written eleven days before he died, now sells for what would have been a fortune to the sorely tried man of genius who wrote it.

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It might be thought that, with dictation and typing supplanting hand writing, there would be few original manuscripts of famous contemporary authors available for the collectors. But about ten years before the War there were instances of novelists, for whose manuscripts a sudden demand had arisen, writing out by hand a complete transcription of one of their printed works (to sell it for a thousand or so), the original manuscript having been destroyed or never having existed except in the form of corrected typescript. Both Conrad and Bennett were tempted to cater in this way for the craze of the moment, and I seem to remember Richard Whiteing doing a manuscript copy of his *No. 5 John Street*. In his later years Conrad's manuscripts and first editions were fetching absurdly high prices in America; but I suspect that the Conrad boom has long been exhausted; that collectors who paid high prices for his books and manuscripts will have had to "write them down" very heavily. (The language of the Stock Exchange comes in appropriately here.) And this goes for Arnold Bennett also I suggest.

Towards the end of his career I had an instructive glimpse of what took place when Conrad wrote an article. I invited him to collaborate in a work I was editing, and suggested a subject which I knew would attract him. The number of words was not to exceed five thousand; payment £200. He correctly interpreted the sort of article I wanted, when he wrote to me: "If I may say so, you want a bit of Conradese. I will do my best to furnish it to you and I only hope you will not be disappointed when you see it." I had no fear of disappointment. Conrad took too much pains with everything he wrote ever to let an unfinished piece of writing leave his hand.

As it happened the contribution in question proved to be about the last finished article he ever wrote; but that did not affect the circumstances I am about to relate. The typescript of his article as it came to me bore some thirty or forty corrections in ink and the author's initials. I suggested to my secretary that if she cared to recopy these sheets of typing she could have the manuscript and send it to New York where some fond collector might pay her a substantial sum for it. This she did and pocketed about £25, the purchaser being the editor of one of the leading American periodicals.

Later, however, I discovered that the form of the typescript as it reached me was its third condition! There existed a complete manuscript of the article in Conrad's handwriting, which had already found a purchaser in America round about a hundred

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pounds. Then there was the first draft in typescript with a considerable number of corrections, which had followed the original manuscript to New York and had been sold for about £50.

No sooner had I printed the article than its author was approached by a London bookseller, who undertook to produce it as a brochure limited to some fifty copies, to sell at £4 or £5 apiece, each copy containing an actual autograph of Joseph Conrad. The author received either one or two guineas for each signature and I have no doubt that the whole of this limited edition was quickly absorbed by Conrad collectors in the United States and at home.

As a piece of literature this little contribution which had occasioned so much financial activity apart from the proper object of its writing was nothing very remarkable. The subject had not even been chosen by the author but by myself. It was certainly interesting because of the charm of the personal touch which Conrad so deftly gave to it in re-calling his early days as a student of old maps. To write and revise it could not well have taken him more than three afternoons. Most probably he wrote the whole at one sitting. Yet observe what his act of writing barely five thousand words produced. (1) £200 paid to the author for copyright. (2) Approximately £150 received by him for the sale of the manuscript in its first and second conditions. (3) Say £100 for autographing the limited edition of the booklet, making a total to the author or his agents of about £450. (4) In addition there was the money paid for the third revised " copy " of the article, not to mention the fact that an American magazine paid my publishers for the right to reprint it about three quarters of the price I had originally given Conrad!

These facts will show the reader how extraordinarily valuable literary energy may become when there is a public not only waiting to read everything that a popular author may write but to pay high prices for the sheets of paper on which he has written down or copied out his immortal compositions. But, alas, these things belong to that strange old world that passed away at the word of a madman (and genius is to madness close allied) in the autumn of 1939. In the strange new world that is dawning it is doubtful if such adventitious aids to money-making from literary wares will be re-established. The supply of new geniuses, however, if one may judge from the flood of new names in the book lists of today, will be greater than ever before in the history of publishing.

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MY COMIC DREAMS AND COINCIDENCE

In those leaves from my war-time diary which I reprinted in 1941 under the title *As the Days Go By . . .* I recorded some remarkable dreams and coincidences of thought that I had experienced during the first sixteen months of the War. I am only too well aware how boring other people's dreams can be, and have not the least intention of recapitulating these experiences here or amplifying them, as I well could do, with many other queer incidents from my trips to dreamland, although I received numerous encouraging letters from readers who proceeded to tell me of their own adventures in that twilight of the unconscious.

With the aid of these I should have little difficulty in adding another volume to the already formidable library of dream literature —but let the thought perish. I am tempted, however, to record here a comic dream which I rescued intact from among the thronging fantasies of one night's slumber (product, perhaps, of some gastric uneasiness). This I do, however, with some diffidence, as there are readers who might think I had invented the slightly silly and rather ribald verses which I *heard* in the dream. On awakening I jotted them down on the writing pad by my bedside, and reproduce them here literally, so any suspicion of fake should be ruled out.

I dreamt that I was walking somewhere quite unknown, with two unknown and unseen persons one on each side of me, a third behind, naturally unseen. We were all keeping step (I could *hear* the sharp staccato of our heel-taps on the road), and as we marched the presence behind me emitted a strange effulgence of light which illumined the road ahead. Presently it started playing a guitar and singing a tune that struck me as entirely original, but which I have since recognized as "Riding Down to Bangor". As we footed it along the road it sang no fewer than five verses, only two of which I could recollect on awakening: the first and the last.

Sunny days at Rio,
  Lounging round about,
Comes news of the market:
  'Bottom fallen out.'

Sunny days at Rio,
  But now I'm growing stout,
Can't get on my swimming suit—
  Another bottom out!"

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As Rio had not been in my mind the day before, or for many a day (I haven't been there for nearly thirty years), and so far as I was concerned the bottom fell out of the market very soon after September 3, 1939, and far from growing stout I am having my suits taken in to fit an attenuated figure, the dream doggerel has no sort of appropriateness to any happening in my waking life. The last time I donned a swimming suit was at Cannes in July, 1939, and perhaps my happening to see it again a few days before the dream among a discarded collection of my sports clothes may have somehow struck a comic chord in my subconscious mind. Anyhow, I think it worth recording, for dreams that have an intrinsically comic twist are very uncommon.

The value of an index word in rescuing even so evanescent a thing as a dream from oblivion was proved to me recently. I awakened at 6 a.m. with all the details of another amusing dream gleamingly clear in my mind. It made me laugh outright in the stillness of the dawn. But I did not write down those details; just turned over and resumed my sleep with the feeling that I would remember everything in the morning and put it on record. By noon not one particle of the dream could I recall. Nor was I able to do so when the tea-gong went. But dipping into the dark recesses of my mind I recalled the key-word Ophelia and up came the whole fabric of the dream, proving that it was in no way baseless. For what it's worth here is the "stuff".

One of these war-time efforts on behalf of the Red Cross. A large hall, dreadfully large. Huge audience. Coughs and hoasts go echoing through the immensity of the hall, reminding me of Scots story about the lord of hoasts. For I discover myself seated on a platform with several others, including unknown lady protagonist, but only one whom I identify by name, J. P. Cousland, known to me as a technical colleague in the production of *Forgotten Men*, and now editing *The Eritrean Daily News* at Asmara. I am (God knows why, for I dislike them) wearing a peaked cloth cap, which, with an indeterminate lounge suit, provides an inadequate make-up for one who is doomed to play the leading male part in the Shakespearean drama about to be presented.

There is no effort at scenic effect. Indeed the vast platform on which the players are assembled is (thank Heaven) walled off from the now impatient audience by a long barrier of high reading-desks such as are used for the daily papers in public libraries.

The leading lady, Ophelia Desdemona Macbeth, gets up and says her piece while I suffer the agonies of the damned in discovering

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that I do not know one single word of my rôle, and do not even know what part I am to play, for I do not know which play has been chosen! J. P. Cousland comes to my rescue by producing a Shakespeare play-book in which all the printed dialogue has been altered by means of typewritten slips pasted on the margins of the pages. I am perspiring with horror at the prospect of my having to stand up and declaim a part so completely outside my knowledge, much of it printed, as I perceive with flutterings of the heart, in English of Chaucer's day such as Shakespeare never wrote, if indeed he had ever read. I do not thank Cousland for his prompting. What the devil was *he* doing there anyway? More perspiration, more horror of word imperfection. . . . If only I knew the name of the play!

Meanwhile the leading lady was endlessly saying her piece and all the other shadowy players were sitting in a dim row behind these merciful reading desks. Why had I ever let myself in for this? I could have given that vast coughing and hoasting audience a display of tap-dancing without the least difficulty, but that seemed out of place in a Shakespearean show. What to do? Ophelia Desdemona Macbeth finished her long, long oration, which seemed strange to me in its uninterrupted course, glad though I was that it lasted so long and as she ended that damned Cousland, prompt book in hand, said " That's your cue ".

Here I awoke in what is known as a " muck sweat ", but with a glorious sense of release from a situation that had become horrifying in the extreme and reached its zenith of absurdity when I found myself adjusting that absurdly inappropriate cloth cap and clearing my throat to spout the splendid Shakespearean phrases not one of which was present in my mind! I awoke with laughter, as I have recorded.

Now what originated so foolish a dream? Well, all that I can offer by way of explanation—and I know how insufficient it is—was the fact that some days before I had promised myself to read through Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *V*, taking the four plays in sequence, having just re-read *King Richard II* after many years. I had got half way through the First Part of *Henry IV*, when I turned to the reading of *Inagua*, by Gilbert Klingel, which had so captured my imagination that not even the re-reading of Shakespeare could prevail against it, for with both books by my bedside I chose to continue with *Inagua* and let *Henry V* wait until I'd finished this the grandest story of real adventure in the world of reality and romance that I have ever encountered since my boyhood

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readings of *Robinson Crusoe* and Ballantyne's *Coral Island* . . . and my subconscious mind said : " Don't tell me that anything is better worth while than Shakespeare." As for Cousland, I had received a letter from him a few days before.

The comic element in these two dream adventures may excuse my recording them so fully, but while I will not essay any serious enquiry into dream psychology as urged upon me by various correspondents I shall ask my reader to consider for a moment how great are the chances that coincidence, that lawless resolvent of so many mysteries, may account for the strangest happenings. This is suggested to me by a letter from a correspondent who comes forward to support my argument that the long arm of coincidence has a stretching capacity which even our dreams do not exceed. Read this and marvel :

" It is part of my business to select and export china ornaments, etc., to a store in Melbourne. Having come across a life size model in pottery of a peacock which I thought they would like to buy, but remembering that some people are superstitious about these birds, I sent them a photograph with a full description, giving size, colouring and name of designer, a Frenchman, and the factory (Minton's) that produced it.

" While the head of the China Department was actually reading my description in his office in Melbourne a reporter of the *Argus* newspaper knocked on the door, and said that a case had been washed ashore and a life-size china peacock had been found in it. Could the pottery expert give him some particulars about it so that he might write it up in his paper ? The case containing the peacock had been shipped from London exactly fifty years previously, in a ship that was wrecked somewhere in the Southern Ocean, so that for fifty years it had been floating about in the sea. It was quite perfect in every detail ! Now, there is nothing mysterious or psychic in this, just pure coincidence."

I received the above from Mr. T. C. Nixon, of Leckhampton Hill, Cheltenham. And as a sequence of improbabilities—the fifty years, the unusual nature of the article, the dramatic moment of discovery—I think it will stand up to a great deal of competition. Another one up for the great god Chance.

There are rare occasions, however, when I could almost believe that even coincidence, so completely demonstrable as an answer to most strange happenings, does not have the very last word. Within an hour of writing the foregoing I was reading in my library in the apple orchard an illuminative essay on " The English Lyric "

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which Laurence Binyon had delivered to the Royal Society of Arts. Therein he quotes those well-remembered lines of Landor's :

Ah, what avails the sceptred race,
Ah what the form divine !
What every virtue, every grace !
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee.

Binyon reprints these two fine stanzas to illustrate an important point in his study of lyric poetry—the value of repetition. Originally Landor wrote " For Aylmer, all were thine ". No one, however dense to the appeal of poetry, could fail to appreciate the vast improvement " made by the substitution of the name Rose for the conjunctive particle addressed to reason and intelligence rather than to feeling ", says the poet-critic, who justly adds, " and what value in the repetition of the name ! "

What strikes me as strange is that Landor should ever for one moment have contemplated Rose as Aylmer. It is repugnant to any true lover even to think of his *inamorata* by her surname and so to address her, even in elegiac verse. But stranger far is the fact that after putting aside the copy of Binyon's essay for future reference my roving eye alighted upon an unfamiliar volume in a darker corner of my library (then in process of re-cataloguing) and I had the curiosity to take the book from the shelf. It is entitled *Letters and Unpublished Writings of Landor*, printed in 1897. Opening it at random, I looked upon a sketch of Rose Aylmer's tomb at Calcutta and was presently seated by the fireside reading all about Rose who died from cholera at the pathetic age of twenty in March 1800, and whose brief girlish romance with Landor gave a sentimental twist to many a later verse by that unstable but highly gifted poet. Well . . . coincidence again ? So I am persuaded—and yet ! . . .

The first publication of these paragraphs on Rose Aylmer brought to me a charming letter from a lady of notable literary taste which added to my knowledge of literary personalia and introduced me to an intriguing little problem in coincidence or imitation. Mrs. Agnes Wason (whose father-in-law, the Rt. Hon. Eugene Wason, M.P., was eminent in the political world of my

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youth) being attracted by my reflections on the long arm of coincidence and the Landor reference wrote to say that she had always wondered whether the " long arm " aforesaid or the lilt of Landor's lines, either consciously or unconsciously imitated, had determined the measure of Kipling's poem " The Benefactor ". The two verses which Mrs. Wason quotes are directly modelled on those which Laurence Binyon gave in his lecture, but I do not think that Landor's ear would have tolerated the last line of Kipling's first verse :

" Ah ! What avails the classic bent
And what the chosen word
Against the uncultured incident
Which actually occurred.

" And what of Art to which we press
Through paint, and prose and rhyme
When Nature in its nakedness
Defeats us every time."

One could almost venture a little bit of literary detection here. Kipling had no doubt seen Rose Aylmer's grave in Calcutta and that would set him to the reading of her sad life-story, when, if he had not earlier come across Landor's poem, he could not fail to make its acquaintance. If one knew the date on which " The Benefactor " was written that would settle any doubt were one curious enough to pursue a solution.

Even more surprising to me than this bit of Kiplingana was the discovery that at a time when I was a literary " columnist " (that word had not yet been popularized if indeed it had been invented) I could have missed a little book, of which Mrs. Wason is good enough to send me a copy, significant far beyond its modest size and pretension. Published in 1902 by Elkin Mathews this dainty duodecimo is entitled *Hand-in-Hand : Verses by a Mother and Daughter*. The author was Mrs. Lockwood Kipling, the daughter Mrs. Fleming. A charmingly old-fashioned title page photographically reproduced from an appropriate design modelled in some plastic material and initialled J.L.K. identifies the husband as the father of Rudyard Kipling. The first thirty-four pages embody the verses from the Mother : the remaining ninety-eight those of the Daughter.

As a warm admirer of Kipling from my first reading of his " Barrack-Room Ballads " in the pages of Henley's *Scots Observer* away back in 1888 I am less disturbed at making so late an acquaint-

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ance with *Hand-in-Hand* as a contribution to my knowledge of English poetry (though it is by no means despicable as such) than at having missed so interesting an item of literary personalia at a time when I was supposed to be *au courant* with everything of the kind. I will not believe that I knew of it and forgot it . . . my memory is my strong point. Even if the relationship of the mother and daughter to a world-famed writer of genius were unknown, these verses should have been noteworthy at the time of their publication, as both disclose unmistakable literary gifts, though not of a kind to send more than the anthologist of today (whose name is now legion) a-fingering the pages. Mrs. Kipling's muse is more given to undertones and is less various than Mrs. Fleming's, though in both there is a sweet sadness that has gone out of fashion and would get the gall of our younger poet-critics, when our poets as critics tell us admirably how poetry should be written and proceed to write it not quite in conformity with their critical ideals. There would be many examples that I could quote of Mrs. Fleming's verse were I writing at length and not merely by the way on *Hand-in-Hand*, for it is never empty and it is always tuneful. " Where Hugli Flows " will appeal to everyone who has had even so short an exile as my two years in South America :

Where Hugli flows, our English eyes are weary,
Our hearts are sometimes very far away.
Needs must, that exile should be long and dreary :
How slow the hours, how lagging long the day,
Where Hugli flows . . .

and " Spion Kop " is a good example of healthy, mournful, but not morbid sentiment that found expression for the grief which many mothers of England were suffering forty years ago and so many more have had to suffer in the enlarging horror of the later wars :

Young Never-Grow-Old, with your heart of gold,
And the dear boy's face upon you ;
It's hard to tell, though we know it well,
That the grass is growing upon you.
Flowers and grass, and the graveyard mould,
Over the eyes of you, Never-Grow-Old,
Over the heart of you, over each part of you,
All your dear body, our Never-Grow-Old.

But chiefly am I drawn to that little book just now by Mrs. Fleming's poem on Rose Aylmer's Grave. It runs to four stanzas

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and repeats the Landor verses already given. This I think is well observed :

About her grave no flowers grow,
No pleasant boughs are stirred
No gentle sun, no quiet snow,
No English bee or bird.
The suns of springtime scorch the stone,
In summer, storm and rave
The winds that herald the cyclone,
The rains that lash the grave.

Rose Aylmer's sister-flowers should spring
In whitest bloom above :
The roses Landor could not bring,
Far distant from his love.
But now, a snake lies near her bed,
The crows perch on the rail,
A kite sweeps past, and overhead
The unclean vultures sail.

One wonders whether that grave in the old South Park Street Cemetery of Calcutta is still cared for now that nearly a century and a half have passed away. Away back in the 1880's we can see in fancy the young journalist Rudyard Kipling and his sister together standing by Rose Aylmer's grave, moved by the pathetic tale of Landor's lost love, the one tempted to emulate the poet's elegiac measure, the other wisely to reflect :

This is her grave : but Landor's verse
Rose Aylmer's monument.

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"BANG WENT SAXPENCE!"

Some reflections on a standard English joke.

THE meanest man I ever knew was an Englishman. So much an Englishman that he once assured me he always wrote down one who sounded his r's an "immigrant from the Northern Kingdom". He was a journalist, hence the circumlocution for Scotsman.

This mean man used to sell postage stamps to other members of the newspaper staff on which he was engaged, charging a small percentage for obliging them. He was a Sunday School teacher, but even that pious office did not induce him to discontinue what I pointed out was an illegal transaction: the vending of postage stamps for private profit, aggravated by the fact that the stamps he sold when his fellow-workers stood in urgent need of them were actually the property of the newspaper, so that he derived profit from capital not his own. But it is not in this that I wish to illustrate his meanness. His name became famous in certain circles for feats of niggardliness unparalleled within my knowledge. One example, related by Arthur Mee, who was present, will suffice.

He was musical, and about once in ten years he loved to have a gathering of musical friends. At one of these gatherings his guests, I was told, sang and played for hours and listened to his singing. No word or hint of refection or refreshment had been given; but upon a fruit plate on the sideboard stood a lonely orange. About ten o'clock the mean man took up this orange, peeled it with great deliberation, and ate it with evident enjoyment.

He was an Englishman . . . and a Sunday School teacher.

Many years ago while discussing the subject of meanness with a clergyman at an hotel in Switzerland, he related a personal experience which is here in point. Headmaster of a rather swagger school for boys in Liverpool, he once accepted an invitation to pass a week-end at the home of one of his pupils, whose father was a prosperous man of business. While there, his host pressed him to smoke several cigars which he loudly recommended as the best to be had in England at the money: four or five guineas a hundred. The clergyman, though no connoisseur, expressed his approval out of politeness.

"Let me send you a box of them," urged his host.

"No, no, you mustn't think of that," protested the tutor.

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"No trouble at all—pleasure—pleasure," persisted the other; and sure enough a box of one hundred arrived soon after the clergyman returned to his school.

The box was accompanied with a bill for the full price, plus carriage. The gentleman was an agent for that brand of cigars. He was also an Englishman.

These are but two cases, which, suggesting others, might on the snowball principle be increased a thousandfold, and the result—a formidable indictment of English meanness. But that is far from my intent or inclination. For no Englishman would thereby be constrained to admit that the Scots have not an exclusive monopoly of the quality. No, like Ian Maclaren's drunken, theological dis-

CHARLES KEENE'S DRAWING FOR AN IMMORTAL JOKE.

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putant, who clung to the station lamp-post and exclaimed as a Parthian shot at his opponent in the departing train, "I tak' my stand on Saint Matthew" (and thereupon slid down on the platform), John Bull would say (if he knew the origin—which I should doubt): "I take my stand on the gospel according to *Punch*, vol. 55, page 235, wherein it is written:

"THRIFT.—PEEBLES BODY (*to Townsman who was supposed to be in London on a visit*). E–eh, Mac! Ye're sune *hame* again!

MAC.—E–eh, it's just a ruinous Place that! Mun, a hadna' been the-erre abune *twa* Hoours when—*Bang*—went *Saxpence*!!!"

For more than five-and-seventy years the bang of that saxpence has been resounding in the daily blethers of John Bull. Untold millions have taken up the joke since Charles Keene gave it immortality in 1868. By lonely camp-fires at the outposts of Empire Englishmen have cracked it, at dinner-tables of the rich, in the coffee-rooms of the poor, at every club, in every pub that ever got a licence, whenever the Scot has been a topic of conversation someone has raked up this mouldy chestnut and thorns have crackled under a pot.

Well, if it gives John Bull so much pleasure, it were churlish of the Scot to take it too seriously, especially as the joke has a foundation in fact, the immortal words having truly been uttered by a visitor from the neighbourhood of Glasgow: not Aberdeen as might have been expected. H. M. Spielmann, in his *History of 'Punch'*, tells us that it was Sir John Gilbert who heard it, and repeated it to Birket Foster and then to two ladies, and as it made them all laugh heartily, he concluded it was good enough for *Punch*. Happily Sandy has laughed at it as heartily as John Bull though he does get tired of it about its two thousandth repetition.

It is to Sandy's credit that he *can* take a joke against himself, but if we examine this favourite of John Bull we find it is not really a gibe at meanness. To be mean is less a matter of self-treatment than the treatment of others. Some of the meanest men I know squander lavishly on themselves. Sandy is more apt to deal niggardly by himself and to squander on others. The two cases stated at the outset are instances of real meanness. Another point has to be noticed in respect to this historic gibe, as to many of similar nature levelled at Scotsmen. Long ago Madam Sarah Grand (who died but yesterday) complained that any irregular action of one woman is almost invariably taken by the male critic as typical of her sex. A woman does something that calls for criticism: "such is the character of women," opines the less deadly of the species.

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A Scot does something comic, shrewd, contemptible. " Such is the Scotsman ! " (more probably ' Scotchman ') says his English critic. Generalizing from the particular.

My orange-eater, and my cigar-agent are no more typical of John Bull than Keene's " Peebles Body " is typical of Sandy. And this said I will seek to illustrate my unbiased attitude by two or three stories of today, and an echo of old days. The following is a " yarn " but it comes within the range of human possibilities.

A traveller for a London firm of wholesale drapers, himself a Scot, had an important customer in Aberdeen, with whom he wished to keep on the best of terms. He had frequently suggested that the Aberdonian should pay him a visit in London, promising to " show him round ". Indeed he even invited him to come and stay at his house in Brixton. After discussing it periodically for some years the Aberdeen draper suddenly made up his mind : he'd be up this summer. Duly the Londoner got a post-card, telling him which train to meet at Euston, as the Aberdonian, accompanied by his wife and two daughters, was taking advantage of a cheap eight-days trip.

" We're for it now," said the traveller to his wife ; " but let's make the best of it—eight days are not a great deal once in a life-time."

The trippers were carried to Brixton in a crowded four-wheeler—it was before the Boer War, you perceive—for which the London Scot paid, as he did for all the costs of entertaining the quartette throughout that week, including the cab back to Euston. Just before the train was to start he proposed a parting dram at the refreshment bar. When the liquor was measured out the traveller put his hand in his pocket to pay, as usual ; but the Aberdonian stopped him suddenly, saying :

" Na, na, mun ; let this ane be at ma expense. Ye've been far, far too decent already."

" Nonsense," protested his friend ; " it's my call and I'll pay."

The draper, who had been fumbling in his pocket meanwhile, got out a penny and said blithely :

" I'll tell ye whit : I'll toss ye for it ! "

An old Scotsman from Peterhead once told me a story of a local worthy—a man in a good way of business, and a bailie, to boot. With that desire to see London which stirs in the heart of every Scotsman soon or later, the bailie thought that he would take his wife to the great city on a visit. But having a considerable traffic with the railway, he approached the station-master with a humble

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request for two free passages. The official, anxious to retain the bailie's goodwill, sent him two first-class passes to London and back, which upset the worthy's calculations; he had expected only third-class tickets. So when he presented himself at the booking-office he asked for the difference in cash between first and third fares. The clerk explained that the request was unusual, as the tickets were complimentary, referring him to the station-master.

"Ye ken weel eneugh," said the bailie, to the latter, "that I niver traivel first class."

"But in this case it's all the same to us," the official explained.

"Nonsense, mun; ye canna get ower the fact that they tickets entitle me and ma wife to traivel first class an' if we're content wi' third surely I ocht to get the difference back."

"You're under no obligation to travel first; and I will, if you like, exchange them for thirds with pleasure; but I can't return any money when no money has been paid. Though I'd prefer you to use them and go first for once in a while."

"Ou, weel, I suppose I'll juist ha'e to; but I can ca' it naething short o' damned extravagance."

One more story of our day—for the facts of which I can vouch—also involves both Aberdeen and London. A farmer well-known in Aberdeenshire to be a man of considerable wealth was seen on many occasions by my informant taking a run round about his homestead in winter to keep himself warm, in order to economize fuel indoors. Yet—will you believe it?—this same man came up to London, and spent about £50,000 trying to run a morning newspaper. One day while smoking his "cutty" pipe in the manager's office in St. Bride Street, he had to interview some person in the waiting-room: whipping the clay pipe out of his mouth, and drying the mouthpiece hurriedly with his "hanky", he said to my friend (the auditor), who was working in the room, "Juist haud that in 'or I come back"! This to save the expenditure of a match for re-lighting. . . .

And here I shall relate a singular set of facts which, though they seem to be spatchcocked at this point, have a real bearing on the subject in hand. My informant, the auditor above mentioned, was a victim of the appalling railway disaster at Aysgill in 1913, when he was burnt to a cinder. Some years later I had occasion, arising out of talk at our dining table in the old Savage Club, on Adelphi Terrace, to tell of the quaint episode in London journalism in which he had figured to the other three members who made up our group of four. These were H. Greenhough Smith, original

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editor of the *Strand Magazine*, J. T. Findlay, editor of a shipping weekly, and Edward Michael, veteran manager of both theatres and newspapers, and a prince of our Bohemia. The first two had left for ever (Findlay d. 1927, Smith d. 1935) that pleasantest of places in all the world, our club-home on Adelphi Terrace, years before it was swept away to make room for the mammoth pile that now occupies the site, but this very day in June, 1943 I have been to our present quarters in Carlton House Terrace (once the stately home of Lord Curzon) to lunch with Teddy Michael on his ninetieth birthday!

FINDLAY (*a quiet, gently spoken Scot*): Funny thing you should bring up the name of old G——, my wife and I are just back from staying with his sister at her fine house in Stirlingshire, where for all her wealth she won't put in electric light. The pleasure she got from going about the rooms and lowering the gas jets to a minimum flame would have been lost with electricity. Yet she is a most generous lady and gives large sums to charities.

SMITH: But the man to tell you all about *The Morning* and its eccentric proprietor is Teddy here, for he was its manager, and I had the pleasure of selling him the printing press on which we had printed our famous flop *The Million*.

MICHAEL: Perfectly true. I had to take train away up to the wilds of Aberdeenshire to find my proprietor on his lonely farm, where he was attended by one aged female. It seemed incredible that a small farmer such as he could possibly be able to find the money even for a secondhand printing press, far less to meet the constant drain of our publishing losses. He was quite ready to promise me the cash in a day or two and sent me back to London happy that I could fix up the transaction as that printing machine was badly needed. The amount was £5,000. The day I was to expect his cheque was that of the Lord Mayor's Show, and I had a little hold-up on my way to the office. When I got there I found no sign of the cheque. That was surprising; he had never failed to keep a promise. So I insisted on having the wastepaper basket examined, even including the discarded envelopes with halfpenny stamps, and in one of these the cheque was found! Can you beat it?

No; but my recollection of these things helps me somewhat to understand that the Scot's openhandedness in large money matters can go with close-fistedness in small: to understand, not to admire.

An instance just occurs to me, though it introduces nothing of the cheese-paring. It was related to me by Lieutenant Shackleton

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himself, two or three days before he sailed on his last tragic voyage to the Antarctic. He had shown me and a friend over his ship *The Quest* (on which I first heard wireless at work) and we were having a farewell lunch at the Savoy where, from one of the windows on the riverside, we could see *The Quest* berthed by the Embankment. He amused us with some of his experiences in raising funds for his various expeditions, and admitted that he had met with extraordinary generosity from the most unexpected sources in Scotland. Stuck for £10,000 to put his finances on a sound basis, someone told him to try old So-and-so of Dundee (the name escapes me) who was a wealthy jute manufacturer. After a preliminary letter he was invited to call and discuss the subject further. So off he went to Dundee, where he found his prospective backer in the office of his jute works and might have mistaken him for one of the employees. They talked about many things other than Antarctic exploration for a while and then proceeded to the worthy man's home, an unpretentious " wee hoose ", where the honours of the unpretentious meal were done by the manufacturer's sister. It all seemed a dreadful mistake and Shackleton was beginning to think about withdrawing his lines from what seemed a most unprofitable stretch of water, when suddenly the old gentleman remarked that it was near time for getting back to his work but that he had read very carefully all the literature the explorer had sent him and felt that he " ought to give him what little support he could ". So saying, he sat down on one of his horsehair chairs at a wee desk in the corner of the room and wrote out a cheque. By now Shackleton had ceased to expect more than a hundred or so. When he looked at the cheque he couldn't believe his eyes : it was for £10,000.

So much for modern instances. Before I attempt to find the moral of my tales (if indeed there be one), let me submit a page from Grey Graham's illuminating study, *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*. The Scots habit of placing a chest at the church door for regular offerings on behalf of the poor continued far into the eighteenth century ; and for many years after the union a vast amount of bad money was in circulation. These two facts explain what follows :

" Once or twice a year," writes Graham, " the elders met for the opening of the chest. This was a grave occasion. It was an anxious moment—the lifting of the lid over the heterogeneous assortment of parochial charity. Not unnaturally, after the lid was raised

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some bitterness was excited. Many Kirk-Session records reveal that emotion. Thus, in Carluke, 1739, it is recorded: 'Sold the sum of £33: 5s., in bad halfpennies, and for £13: 15s., *inde* loss to the poor, £19: 13: 00.' Next year it is stated: 'Sold 8 lbs. of bad copper for 1 pounds 13*sh.* Scots, *inde* loss to the Session £4: 2: 00.' Year by year through all parts of Scotland similar complaints were uttered: while fishing villages and trading towns cost the Session most vexation, owing to the base assortment of barterless foreign money—or, as they were termed 'furren curreners'—which came into the hands of the people and quickly afterwards passed into the hands of the elders. The Session knew that every doit was a mockery to the poor, and every bodle or 'lettered turner' was a scandal to charity. A statistically minded parochial historian in noting the fact that during the ten years' incumbency of a session clerk at Cambuslang there was no less than £84: 2: 8 Scots of these worthless pieces of metal laid in the plates or ladles, makes the unpleasant estimate that if each contribution was one penny Scots in the form of a doit, there must have been 20,190 acts of meanness and hypocrisy perpetrated; and allowing that a third of the population of 1,300 went to the kirk, it is concluded that each Sunday every eleventh worshipper deliberately deceived the elders and cheated the poor—an interesting but discomforting calculation. These unworthy offerings (which were the least worthy when given at communions, as the sick and distressed and indigent were helped from these collections at the church door on the sacramental Monday) were condemned by ecclesiastical courts; but rebukes and threats of ministers were disregarded. In vain did Kirk-Sessions 'desire their minister to exhort the people not to mock God by casting into the offering doits and other money that is not current'. In vain did the Synod of Aberdeen in 1755 appoint its moderator 'to talk with the officiers of custom to do what they could to prevent the importation of base coin'. Yet all these charges sink into insignificance before the accusation, that country people in Aberdeenshire were in the practice of putting into the plate bad halfpence and of taking out good ones."

And now must I face the implications of the evidence which I have submitted.

The most valuable data, though it looks the most damning, is that leaf from Grey Graham's record of olden times. Scotland was a miserably poor country in those days. Dr. Johnson had truth on his side when—playfully or maliciously, just as one regards him—

Is not this a plural word?

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he used to tease the Scotsmen he met in London about their country's poverty. When we remember that " one pound Scots " meant twenty pence, and " one penny Scots ", the third of a farthing, we have an inkling of the poverty that must have prevailed with a currency so contemptible.

In the early years of the present century we used to get much sound advice to " think imperially ", which, alas, fell on unheeding ears. But consider the effect of generations of thinking in pounds Scots upon the minds of Scottish people when their currency changed over to sterling! The grip of the past, the subtle power of our forefathers' thoughts upon our own character, is stronger than we readily realize. Not unnaturally, it may have produced a measure of caution in the average Scot on money matters, but apart from this, the common people of Scotland were so poverty-stricken in the eighteenth century that it is surprising they had even bad coins to place in the poor-box. That was less evidence of meanness than of misery. Yet not many years after that chapter in puir Auld Scotia's story the early seceders from the Auld Kirk actually scraped together good money enough to send missionaries to America, to England and to Ireland! Their self-sacrifice in doing so, futile or fruitful as we may esteem it, would, perhaps, find little favour with modern church-goers, less confident of their own salvation or of any need to " tell the world ". I would have the English reader note, however, that, with the coming of the industrial revolution, as Scotland advanced in prosperity there grew up in the larger towns charities to which hardly any parallels could be found in England.

This, then, not entirely in jest, do I submit: the Scots acquired the habit of giving even when they had nothing but obsolete bodles and doits to give, while the English have never so generally acquired the habit; nothing is more striking than the difference between the amounts publicly raised for philanthropic purposes in Scotland and in England. Of course, Sandy has long been able to afford more than John Bull, for while the latter has gone on assuming that the Johnsonian jibes at Scotland and the Scots still hold good the long-suffering objects thereof have steadily worked away (" aye work awa ") until about the opening of this century statisticians assured us the Scotsman earned on an average £45 a year while the Englishman earned only £38, and poor Pat £20. Lacking recent statistics of the average individual earnings, I can only suggest that if they have changed in favour of the English worker, that might be accounted for by the irresistible pressure of the southward-moving Scot.

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Endless instances of niggardliness may be found among the Scots just as meanness abounds among the English—if one goes in search of it. It is always easy to find what one wants to find in illustration of national characteristics. As the Scot has the defects of his qualities, if he has the inclination to be mean, he can be as mean as any Englishman. But with the impulse otherward, he can outdo John Bull in charity, in generosity, in hospitality.

Beaconsfield said that the fourpenny-bit had been coined to enable Scotsmen to be generous. A jibe that long since lost its point with the disuse of the groat: though I detect a greater use of the threepenny bit in the North than in the South of our Island. I also recall that the late Arthur Diósy used to raise a cheap laugh when lecturing (in England) by saying that he always "received after a lecture numerous letters (*postcards from Scotland*) asking how to pronounce his name". Scots have become so accustomed to these musty jokes about their national meanness that for many years now they have themselves been manufacturing much more ingenious "Anecdotes from Aberdeen" and finding a ready market for them as a staple of English humour. For the Scot in the matter of humour has much in common with the Jew as each delights in inventing jokes against himself and they vie with each other in acts of generosity. My friend of old years, Walter Emanuel, who used to write *Punch's* "Charivaria", put many of these into circulation, but not in the pages of *Punch*.

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THE SCOTSMAN IN COCKAYNE

NOTE. *Like "Bang Went Saxpence!" this chapter was meant to be one of a group of light-hearted sketches illustrating and contrasting certain traits of Scots and English character; a project never completed. But I venture to print the following as written at least a decade before the war, for I perceive no great changes of racial characteristics that would lessen whatever interest or point these observations may have possessed when first put on paper. Neither of the chapters mentioned has been printed before.*

THE region known as Cockayne is, strictly speaking, that lying around Bow Church and within sound of its antique bells. It was possibly on a day when the wind was in the south-east that Dick Whittington heard Bow Bells chiming "turn again Dick Whittington" as he climbed Highgate Hill wellnigh four miles distant. There is a stone marking the spot, to commemorate his decision to return.

Thus in the days before electric trams and motors and other noisy things that make up "central London's streaming roar", the kingdom of Cockayne was one of considerable extent, and originally it was "the land of plenty". Perhaps the early pioneers of the Scots invasion, those cannie bodies who came for peaceful penetrative purposes, had more thought of the remoter significance of the word than of its association with Bow Bells. The land of the Cockney was their land of Canaan. Which reminds me that a Glasgow schoolboy when asked to describe what a land overflowing with milk and honey would be like, replied, with admirable brevity and discernment, "Awfu' sticky!" The experience of many generations has proved the accuracy of this schoolboy definition as touching the Scotsman's Canaan. For it cannot be gainsaid that many North Britons who have made their ways to London have found it sticky enough to hold them for the remainder of their days.

But primarily it is the man rather than his Canaan we are to consider, though it is difficult to detach the one from the other, and curious to notice how the individualities of each—for cities are as individual as men—are mutually reactive. The Scot has blazed his trail all over London and the London Scot gives unmistakable evidence of the city's influence upon him.

I had thought of opening these reflections with a story, so ancient that it might pass for new; having observed that in after-dinner speeches heartiest laughter is awakened by immemorial jest. But courage failed me, and I have made this other beginning. I am persuaded that to have read all the good jokes of Scots and English

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and to possess an uncomfortably retentive memory is a condition less enviable than never to have heard the best of our national quips or to have forgotten them all. That my reader's is the latter and happier state, I hope; so that I may proffer once more to point my moral, this hoary chestnut which, even at the thousandth repetition, like Barrie's Pantaloon, may not fail " to get the laugh ".

A stranger in London desiring to visit the Caledonian Asylum found himself in Fleet Street with no notion of the direction. To a policeman, he said :

" Can you direct me to the Caledonian Asylum ? "

" Man, you'rre in it noo," was the historic reply.

There in a twinkling is the low-down on London : *the* Caledonian Asylum. But its inmates regale themselves with milk and honey, their overseers are kith and kin ! The pilgrim from the North who arrives for the first time in the realm of Cockayne may well wonder if his ears are bewitched, as in the speech of passers-by he will more often detect the burring of the " r " than the dropping of the " h ". Should he journey Highgate way, or Streathamwards, he will hear the soft familiar accent of his countrymen whenever tongues are loosed in railway carriages. Here is part of an over-drawn and unconvincing page from *Sentimental Tommy* which, if the reader will bear with me, I shall endeavour to confute :

" In Thrums Street, as it ought to have been called, herded at least one-half of the Thrums folk in London, and they formed a colony, of which the grocer at the corner sometimes said wrathfully that not a member would give sixpence for anything except Bibles or whisky. . . . When mixing with the world they talked the English tongue, which came out of them as broad as if it had been squeezed through a mangle, but when the day's work was done, it was only a few of the giddier striplings that remained Londoners. For the majority there was no raking the streets after diversion, they spent the hour or two before bed-time in reproducing the life of Thrums. . . .

" The rooms were furnished mainly with articles bought in London, but these became as like Thrums dressers and seats as their owners could make them, old Petey, for instance, cutting the back off a chair because he felt most at home on stools. Drawers were used as baking-boards, pails turned into salt-buckets, floors were sanded and hearthstones ca'med, and the popular supper consisted of porter, hot water, and soaked bread, after every spoonful of which they groaned pleasantly, and stretched their legs. Sometimes they played at the dambrod, but more often they pulled down the blinds

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on London and talked of Thrums in their mother tongue. Nevertheless few of them wanted to return to it, and their favourite joke was the case of James Gloag's father, who being homesick flung up his situation and took train for Thrums, but he was back in London in three weeks."

If our Pilgrim from the North be observant, and that is certain since he is here spying out the land, he will marvel at the "weel kent" names on so many of the prosperous places of business. He will detect the common cognomens of Highlander and Lowlander over innumerable flourishing establishments. He will realize that his native whiskies hold Cockneydom in thrall and smother it in every form of bold advertisement. He will find Hendersons, Mackays, Buchanans, Cochranes, Macdonalds, Thomsons, Taylors, Murrays, Robertsons, Macmillans, and many a hundred others familiarly named, managing insurance companies, theatres, banks, warehouses, public offices, public houses—what not. He's in the Caledonian Asylum sure enough and if he happen to have acquired a Bank of England "fiver" he will note that it is autographed with the good Scots name of Nairne. He may even remember that it was a Scot called Paterson who started the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street on her astonishing career.

Perhaps he may be surprised to find in the suburban reaches how many of the streets have been christened with Scottish names, and he will surely remark that row upon row of trim built villas use or abuse the names of every Scottish glen and ben he knows—and many others he nor any living Scot has never heard of. "Braeside", "Craigie Knowe", "Gowanlea", "Kelvinside", and even "Ingle Neuk" will greet him from their gate-posts.

There is, of course, no good reason to conclude that a douce Scots family abides within "Ingle Neuk", for, alas, there may not be a person in the house who understands the ineptitude of its christening or could pronounce the word "loch",—as true a test of Scottish upbringing as "truly rural" is of postprandial perspicacity—not to mention Auchtermuchty. Many of these Scots-christened houses are really wards of the great Asylum; but it happens that not a few of the London house-builders have names that begin with "Mac", or are otherwise as Scots as Adam—one remembers that the building of the Adelphi district was chiefly the work of the Brothers Adam—and those builders, having found London so sticky, delight to call up memories of their native land by the simple and inexpensive process of christening with the old remembered words the houses they build. The hanging gardens of Babylon were said to have

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been built by a king to please his queen who hailed from a land of hills, but Canute rebuking the waves was scarcely less impotent before the forces of Nature than that Babylonian king seeking to imitate by the feeble work of man the massy grandeur of the Highlands—and he could have had no sense of economy. This echo of ancient story has a moral, however, in showing us that the memory of a land of hills had a powerful tug at the heart even thousands of years ago. Doubtless Babylonian villadom had its "Braesides" and its "Craigie Knowes".

"The Caledonian Asylum!" True words spoken in jest. The endless stream of new inmates for the Asylum might be thought to indicate that, as an institution, its attractions were irresistible, were it not that every thoughtful Londoner knows his city for a stony-hearted stepmother. No, if the pilgrim from the North who pitches his tent within or near the borders of Cockayne has a knack of prospering in his adopted country, the credit is less to the country than to the man. For it is here that the most notable trait of Scottish character asserts itself: adaptability. And this in the teeth of Barrie's "Thrums Street". The typical Englishman is infinitely more the creature of circumstance than is the Scot. The success of the one is greatly determined by the conditions in which he finds himself, and if Chance the Piper plays him away to a strange place where these conditions are not reproduced he does not so readily "correspond" (to quote Spencer) "to his new environment". Sandy, on the other hand, possesses to a remarkable degree the faculty of changing his methods of life to suit any new set of circumstances with which fate presents him. He is a born diplomat, and perhaps it is evidence of the curious inability of his English critics to appreciate his essential independence of character, which enables the Scot readily to adapt himself to changing fortunes, that this national characteristic should have found its most popular expression in the burlesque figure of Sir Pertinax Macsycophant and his exposition of "the noble art of booing".

This ability to adapt oneself to the variable moods of Fortune is scarcely matter for marvel in a people notoriously partial to the principles of logic, which teaches us never to fly in the face of circumstances. Scottish proverbs are not so plentiful as Italian and I recall none at the moment with the pith of "*Chi sputta contro vento, sputta contro si*" (who spits against the wind spits against himself), but the sentiment is worthy of a Mackay. In the matter of names, for instance, I have often remarked the working of this principle during my long years of England. There are few things to which

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men are more apt to be foolishly attached than the proper spelling of their names: an American, probably having acquired his more recently, is affronted if you distort it more than he has already done. But it happens there are many Scottish names that are for ever doomed to be either unpronounceable or unspellable by the Englishman. Let us take at random Strachan, Murdoch, Farquhar, Menzies and Colquhoun. The first of these has at least three alternatives in English: Stratchen, Straken and Strawn, all more or less offensive to the person named. Of course, every Englishman pronounces Murdoch with a k, while Farquhar becomes Farkoa, or Farker. I have found Scotsmen who, to further the amenities of their life in Cockayne, have positively taken to spelling their names as Strawn, Farker, or Murdock. Nay, I believe there are those who have boldly adopted the phonetic form and subscribed themselves Mingis or Cohoun; while there are Macleans so tired of being called Mackleen that they have submissively condescended upon McLane.

This characteristic is best illustrated in an anecdote which I had the honour of introducing to the world of print, but which I have since seen sadly hashed by Sassenach scribes. An old friend of mine, a Presbyterian parson in Nottingham, employed quite fifty years ago a jobbing gardener who gave his name as Hogg, and mentioned that his father had come from the North. (Most good gardeners, by the way, come from North of the border, where ordinary folk take far less pride in gardening than they do in England. Perhaps the very "dourness" of Scottish soil explains why Scots gardeners excel in England.)

"From the Border country, I suppose," said the parson, "judging by your name." (One recalls James Hogg, "the Etterick Shepherd".)

"No, sir. From Aberdeen," replied Hogg, whose "Nott'nam" accent showed no trace of his origin.

"That's odd," pursued my friend, "as Hogg is not an Aberdeen name. But Ogg is a local name there."

"Yes, sir, and my father used to say as how he spelt his name that way at first; but everybody called 'im Hogg. So he took to spelling his name H-o-g-g! An' then, sir, everybody called 'im 'Ogg!"

In this wise had the astute Aberdonian come by his own. Yet I have met Cockneys—men of note, mark you, men whose names are known afar in the realm of letters—who were unable to smile at this, because they themselves said "'ome" when they meant home,

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just as they spoke of "Lenar" and "Amerrcur", "lor", and "idear" under the delusion that they were saying Lena, America, law, and idea.

Adaptability, I assert, is the key-note of Sandy's success in Cockayne—and in every corner of the globe. He is even prepared to water his whisky after he crosses the border! Adaptability, tenacity of purpose, perseverance. All excellent qualities, "in moderation", as Sandy himself might say. But any Englishman infected with Scotophobia sees no moderation in these and judges a race by a few individuals or, worse still, by some old-established caricatures. One must not hark back to Dr. Johnson too often—his alleged antipathy to the Scot is known to all who know naught else of him—especially as he shall be put in the witness box when the case of English Self-Reliance *v.* Scots Clannishness comes up for hearing. For he did no more than reflect a feeling of his time and give it the edge of his own sharp tongue. But his contemporary Macklin in his play *The True Born Scotsman* proved a whole hogger with the Caledonian caricature of Sir Pertinax Macsycophant.

"Nae, Sir," says Sir Pertinax to his son. "I'll tell you how I raised it (his fortune). Sir, I raised it by booing," suiting the action to the word, as he bows absurdly low. "Sir, I could never stand straight in the presence of a great man; but always booed, and booed, and booed—as it were by instinct."

Lord Northcliffe told me that nowhere else did his newly acquired title of nobility occasion such genuflexions as in Scotland. One must have lived in Scotland to witness the difference that comes over a human being when he passes from the stage of plain John Thomson to Bailie Thomson. "Man, ye micht stop my coo!" shouted a woman (it's an old, old story). "Woman," retorted the bailie thus addressed, "I'm no' a man; I'm a magistrate!" The king of these realms and Emperor of India is not so proud a man as a newly made Scots bailie. He's a bailie for some three years and "ex-bailie" for all eternity, since he will go to his grave and be recorded on the headstone thereof as "ex-Bailie John Thomson". Yet, may it not be that this worship of titles, even of the most transient and trashy sort, is akin to that military discipline which decrees that he who is to command must first learn to obey? If a Scot "my lords" Baron Peatreek unnecessarily, it may be that he is doing as he would expect to be done by—and failing a barony and its prefix he will one day make shift, if need be, with a J.P. as an appendix. Oh, yes, adaptability is a Caledonian trait.

Horace Walpole tells us that he had heard there was small merit

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in Macklin's play saving the resemblance of Sir Pertinax to twenty thousand Scotsmen! I wonder. For I have no prejudice in favour of Scots and things Scottish. To me many Englishmen are as Scotsmen, so that had it been my lot to live in Dr. Johnson's time I might have been "as an Englishman to him". If Johnson and Walpole had lived to read John Galt's *Sir Andrew Wylie* (1822), they would have found in that sympathetic portrait of a Scot fresh food for their Scotophobia, and Macklin would have hailed Sir Andrew as no very distant relative of Sir Pertinax. For the Scot has suffered more at the hands of his countrymen than at those of his English critics. A more nauseating, unctuous time-server than the hero of Galt's novel I do not care to contemplate, and being presented to us for admiration, Sir Andrew is more objectionable than Sir Pertinax, who is offered frankly as a satirical personage.

Touching the history of the Scot in London, however, I recall a very racy chapter by J. A. Lovat-Fraser in the *Law Magazine*, and I am glad to have made a note of it. For really frank and penetrating criticism of the Caledonian commend me always to a "brither Scot".

"One of the best examples of the successful Caledonian was Lord Glenbervie", wrote J. A. Lovat-Fraser, "who, beginning life as a surgeon, subsequently became a barrister, and ultimately a peer and son-in-law to Lord North, the Prime Minister. Lord Ellenborough used to call Glenbervie the 'Solicitor-General', because he always asked for everything that became vacant. Ellenborough used to swear that Glenbervie kept a Scotsman at half-a-crown a week, who was always on the look-out, and who sat up all night in order that he might call Glenbervie, if anyone died in office. Lord Brougham relates that when the Kingdom of Etruria was announced by Napoleon, and no one for some time was named, he and his friends were speculating who was to have it. 'Don't you know?' said Ellenborough. 'Glenbervie has asked for it, and has great hopes.' The same phenomenon has been repeated in many Scottish lawyers. Lord Brougham has related how 'Jock Campbell', when fighting his way to the woolsack, 'pestered' him with 'his everlasting applications for something for himself or his connections', and of his 'insane desire to better himself'. This trait, as much as any other, may explain why, as Bagehot says, 'all men are arid towards young Scotchmen'."

Here we see tenacity and perseverance *in excelsis*. Though, after all, can we not multiply such examples by the score, not from the memorabilia of the past, but from the personalia of the present? And not from Caledonians only, but equally and proportionately

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to their racial preponderance from the Englishmen of our time? Here again "Englishmen are as Scotsmen" to me, Dr. Johnson! It was not a Scotsman of whom Sir James Barrie remarked (with no sting in the tail of his witticism), when a noise was heard in the London flat above that of a friend's where he was lingering in "the wee sma' 'oors", the upper flat being tenanted by a popular author-politician, "perhaps it is Gilbert Parker climbing upwards in the night". And Sir Gilbert has climbed to some purpose, good fellow and brilliant author that he is.

There are "climbers" in Cockayne who are not Scots and most of the Scots who climb there do it in broad daylight. It is perhaps because their upward career is so obvious to all and there are so many of them aspiring in proportion to their racial numbers, that jealous eyes watch them and envious tongues malign. For there is no denying Sandy's knack of succeeding, and success in others is often offensive to those who do not themselves achieve it. To know what one wants and steadily to pursue it, is a trait of character the Scot has been exhibiting for generations in Cockayne and wherever the sons o' men have gathered. It has a fault, of course, like every virtue.

There are Scots who are obtrusively conscious of their success and these are quite as offensive as any Englishman touched with similar consciousness. Indeed, to be honest I must confess they are more offensive. They walk the earth with an exaggerated swagger, they don expensive garments, wear the thickest of gold curbs to advertise the costly watch attached thereto; they smoke superfluously large cigars and wear their hats at a challenging angle. You will usually find them eminent as members—with aspirations to the post of vice-chairman—of the local Burns Club. By so much as they once were poor, but pushing, are they now proud and ostentatious. Have not I watched with amusement the mole-hill climbings of these suburban Scots of Cockneydom? And are not they usually pompous little fellows? But they are of small account in the estimate of a people and their thirst for fame is slaked once a year by being permitted to "respond for the ladies" at the Burns Dinner and to see the great event recorded in one or two lines of the report in the local newspaper. The suburban Presbyterian Church also offers them a fruitful field for local distinction and the weekly display of a glossy silk hat. They have "got on".

"Getting on" is a passion with the Scot. You see it often in Barrie's books and plays, set forth by the obvious contrasts of domestic scene, starting with horse-hair furniture of the good

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Victorian period and ending with the latest tapestried reproductions of the glorious age of Chippendale. And Cockayne is one of the easiest places for "getting on" if one may judge by results. To "get on" is equally the aim of many English. "The mark I have and I must wed," said Meredith. The Scot brings off that nuptial more often than the English. It is hard to admire the man who scores a bull's eye on the same target where you achieve only an "outer".

Look how the London Scottish, commended so warmly by General French for their gallant work in those epic days when the Little British Army so brilliantly withstood the staggering shocks of the Hun, were made the subject of unkindly comment, so that —unkindest cut of all—it was even said there were few Scots in the regiment and that it was composed chiefly of Lancashire lads and Irishmen! "Envy is a coal, comes hissing hot from Hell," quoth "Festus" Bailey and at times its hissing may be heard in Cockneydom when Scots get their meed of praise. But again, there may be a reason. In the days when our armies were recruited by means of brass-band parades and canvassing of free citizens, a recruiting officer of the London Scottish called upon the manager of a large works in London and asked permission to appeal for recruits among his employees.

"You are free to appeal to them," said the manager; "but I don't think it's worth your while, as we employ very few Scotsmen here, and I understand you want only Scots."

"Scots, or superior English," said the officer.

The anecdote—doubtless apocryphal and of Scottish origin—will serve, for it discloses an attitude of mind. The Scot in Cockayne is conscious that he belongs to a "superior" race. Small blame to him, when he takes stock of the life around him. At home he cannot see his superiority for his superiors. But there is something of that tilted hat, that suburban London Scottish pomposity, to which I have alluded, in this. It jars on the Englishman who is, withal, a good-natured easy-living fellow and I do not blame him if the little imp of jealousy occasionally gives edge to his tongue in speaking of the Scot within his gates. Yet, on the whole, it must be allowed that English criticism of the Scot is far more common than Scottish criticism of the English. Indeed, the latter is as unusual as the former is habitual—possibly because, as the Scot very rightly maintains, he is *not* "beneath criticism". His success is largely due to the fact that he insists on himself. He has a personality and he advances it in the stronghold of English prejudice

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for the barbs of the impersonal. The Scot in London is far more a racial entity than any Englishman. You cannot visualize in one personality a mixture of Lancashire, Warwickshire, Devonshire, Sussex and Suffolk, or of Yorkshire, Worcestershire, Cumberland and Gloucestershire, so easily as you can the qualities of the Scot from Aberdeen to Galloway.

" A shut mouth and a sententious air will not serve you for ever," says Crosland, the lampoonist, to the Scot in London. They have not served him at all, for the most silent men the Scot will find in Cockayne will be natives thereof. They abound in the halls of St. Stephen, where " the shut mouth and sententious air " are the hall-marks of English lack-o'-brains who achieve baronetcies by looking wise and cultivating aldermanic stomachs. In fact, to the Scot in London the open mouths of the English are a symbol of the poverty of the grey matter stirring in their craniums. The average Scot shuts his mouth when he is not speaking, eating or drinking. He is no dog to breathe through his tongue ! But " gently scan your fellow man " tomorrow in train or tram and note how the English travel open-mouthed—and silent. The Scot is essentially a talkative creature and there is no greater misrepresentation of him than that of the shut mouth. But, it is true he can shut it to some purpose should the need arise, just as he usually opens it to talk good sense, even though he give his own regional intonation to the King's English. Which reminds me of a Scot who asked a policeman at the Swiss Cottage for the Marlborough Road, innocently pronouncing the " r " in the first as well as in the third syllable, and so making four syllables of the Cockney's two.

" Never 'eard of it ! " said the policeman. And not until his interlocutor laboriously spelt the name did the light penetrate.

" Ow ! You mean the Mawlbro Rowd ! " he said with a smile as he directed the enquirer.

Change the scene and put Mr. Cockney in Renfield Street, Glasgow, asking for " Suchahole Street " and I shall venture the opinion that the Glasgow policeman would immediately direct him to Sauchiehall Street, with some unspoken reflection on the " puir body " who had made so poor a shot at so familiar a name.

But the Scotsman in Cockayne has many compensations for the little pin pricks he must endure. He reflects with satisfaction on the richer life he leads among a good-natured people who readily recognize his talent, (far less envious of his success than are his fellow Scots), and of the sunnier skies under which he works out his social destiny. If occasionally he lingers at King's Cross

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or Euston when the Scottish Express is going out, to experience that mystic "home feeling" which the North-bound travellers exhale and the notice-board, "Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen" recalls, he does not let his sentimentality overcome his discretion and it is with a great content he catches his own train to that outward suburb of Cockayne in which he has deliberately cast his lot.

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MY BIRTHDAY IN EGYPT

PROBABLY I was as much to blame as my schoolmates for having been nicknamed for a while "the Egyptian". Those were the days of the Arabi Pasha rebellion and the bombarding of Alexandria. Enough that I had been born some eleven years before at a place called Alexandria to acquire a whiff of notoriety among my playmates—carefully omitting to explain to them that my Alexandria was really not the one the British Navy was bothering about just then. Quite possibly that boyish make-believe was not without its influence in first turning my thoughts towards an interest in Egyptian antiquities which had a still more powerful incentive at that very time, as I shall note presently. But the matter of my birthday has first to be disposed of.

When one has lived as long as I have birthdays are occasions to be ignored rather than rubricated in one's private book of life. I have always felt that in the matter of birthday gifts it is more blessed to give than to receive. That blessedness I have long enjoyed—still enjoy—but having most of my life taken as much pains to avoid as others expend on encouraging jubilation at the anniversaries of their first emergence on this planet, I felt one night that I had achieved a unique thing.

Enjoying my after-dinner havana (a real one, none of your "British made") in the hotel lounge two old friends whom I hadn't seen for some time drifted in, and after their enquiries about one's health, happiness and plans, it suddenly occurred to me that it was my birthday. And not one that many would have forgotten about, for lo, I had reached the Psalmist's allotment! Paying only a modicum of homage to most of the moralizings of these old Hebrews and none at all to their prophetic stuff I was feeling very well, thank you, knowing that my insurance company still considered me a first-class life and was open to take a risk on my enduring for the best part of another decade—quite long enough to look forward to in this sadly changed and changing world. Enough to see the end of Hitler and Musso anyhow. That's worth living for! But I felt that a bottle of Pérrier Jouet 1928 was not out of place and later on in the luxury suite of a famous entertainer, the celebration extended far into the morning. I even went so far as to admit that I had never felt better in my life, prefacing the admission with the reminder that many a brief candle has been snuffed within

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a few hours of similar boasting. All the same I hold to the opinion that years don't count and women who forget their birthdays after forty are not so silly as they are commonly supposed to be. Old Philip James Bailey (whom I first knew in Nottingham when he had just turned eighty and who went on writing for another six years) put it best of all in *Festus*—

> We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
> In feelings, not in figures on a dial . . .

The rest of his immortal lines I would blush to ascribe to myself —hence the three little dots.

Well, it happened when I returned to my country home in seaward Sussex that I came across, unlooked-for, a little, long-forgotten book that has had some impact on my way of life—" as the twig is bent the tree's inclined ". And folded inside the cover were these notes which, it would seem, I had scribbled twelve years before almost to a day; having a birthday touch they may not be out of place here:

" I arrived in Egypt for the first time on the day I completed my fifty-eighth year. It had been the passion of my boyhood to see the vast monuments of Egypt's stupid civilization. The flame of this desire had been lit by the reading and re-reading of a book by W. H. Davenport Adams, a prolific and dexterous maker of books in the days of my youth. *The Land of the Nile* was its title. I had received it as the drawing prize (for that was one prize I never missed) at the old Alexander's School in Duke Street, Glasgow, in 1883. In the long stretch of years that had intervened between the awakening of my desire and its fulfilment I had trafficked much in Egyptian lore and studied numerous works of our leading Egyptologists, with many of whom I had become personally acquainted through editing *Wonders of the Past*, but I landed in Egypt without the slightest thrill, with no more exaltation of mind than I had been getting off the train at Victoria.

" I was going to see things that were no longer profoundly mysterious to me, who had now so fully explored them in every detail of drawing, diagram, photograph, and expert description. Merely monuments of pathetic human folly. The exquisiteness of the Egyptian art could co-exist with the most childish conceptions of human destiny, just as in our time the authentic scientific knowledge of a Sir Oliver Lodge could share cranial quarters with notions of immortality that are not more acceptable to the rational mind than the phantasmagoria of Egyptian pantheism. In all the

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history of Egyptian religion the one gleam of genuine intelligence was contributed by Akanaton and his adoration of the sun, and he proved no match for the old priesthood with their thousands of years of organized superstition.

" The Pyramids of Gizeh are like those persons we all know who look so much better in photographs than in the flesh. Who has never seen the Pyramids or the Sphinx save in pictures or in photographs has the best mental impression of these marvels of the ancient world. Close at hand they lack every element of beauty and impressiveness. You are conscious only of the sheer stupidity of the mind that conceived them. So much labour and agony has never been poured out on one spot of earth to so little purpose. For nearly fifty years I had dreamt of looking upon the Pyramids some day. Vainest of dreams when translated into reality. As monuments of human folly they ask to be forgotten. But seen in glamorous moonlight or in the ruddy glow of the setting sun—and a mile or two away—they are almost as beautiful as some conical hills of nature's I have looked upon in the Andes, in the Auvergne, in Scotland and in many another land. . . ."

I am not prepared today entirely to approve these random notes, but they have some value as providing an honest first impression which subsequent investigation at close hand, climbing to the top and penetrating the interior galleries and chambers, did not greatly modify. Countless thousands of slaves were sacrificed by the insensate Cheops in rearing the 88,500,000 cubic feet of masonry for no purpose other than to provide an abiding place for his embalmed body so that it would remain unsullied in its sarcophagus where his " ka " or invisible double could share his resting place and, being still alive, could enjoy the visible funerary meats provided by the priests, while his " ba " or soul (pictured as a human-headed bird) roamed the other world at will, returning at times to inhabit the physical body of the God-King, for which purpose long diagonal shafts reaching upwards to the open air were considerately provided.

But the real purpose of the Great Pyramid, according to a small but wealthy group of misguided followers of Charles Piazzi Smyth, the astronomer with a bee in his bonnet, whose book *Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid* (1864) was first introduced to me about 1892 by a slightly mad acquaintance, is to record the history of the Earth and Man from their creation to their doom. We are actually asked to credit that the Great Pyramid was built under guidance from the Divine Spirit for that unique purpose.

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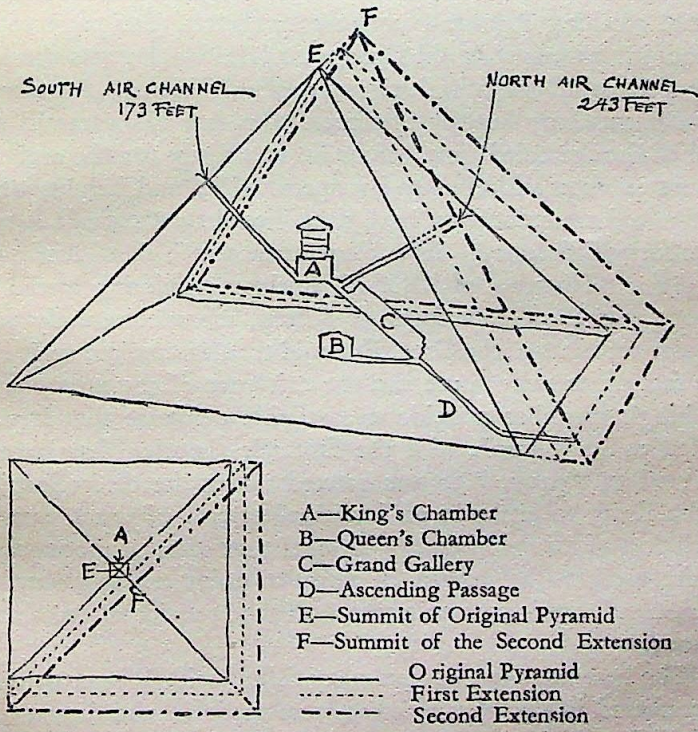
They do an ill service to the Divine Being if they believe that He callously destroyed thousands of His creatures in the setting up of Cheop's mountain of masonry—sole remaining of the Seven Wonders—for a purpose so debatable. Half-an-hour with Dr. George A. Reisner, America's greatest Egyptologist (whose personal guidance it was my privilege to enjoy in other parts of the inexhaustible cemetery of Gizeh, where for over forty years he lived and worked so fruitfully) would have dispelled any inclination to accept the absurdities of Piazzi Smyth's "measurements", to which the Royal Society refused to listen in 1874.

To round off and amplify this recollection I shall put on record certain illuminating things which Dr. Reisner told me about the Great Pyramid. It is far from common knowledge that in the building of that tremendous tomb Cheops twice had to enlarge his original plan for a strange reason: his continued good health! A glance at a sectional drawing of the Great Pyramid will show that the principal chamber in its interior is widely out of the true centre of that man-made mountain. No obvious purpose is served by this



ROUGH DIAGRAMS OF THE GREAT PYRAMID

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displacement. The building of his pyramid was the main lifework in which any Pharaoh of the earlier dynasties engaged, a task that he seldom lived to see completed. It was Cheops's peculiar fate, however, to see his mountain of a tomb approaching completion while he was " still going strong ". So it would seem he ordered his architects to carry on the good work by increasing its mass while preserving the exactness of its proportions.

With his pocket pencil Dr. Reisner drew for me on the back of an envelope held against the smooth limestone of the temple-tomb of Queen Hetep-heres, which he had recently discovered in the neighbourhood of the Great Pyramid and inside which we stood discussing this singular subject, a section of the pyramid showing that in the process of widening and heightening it beyond its original dimensions the king's chamber had been thrown somewhat out of its central position, the additional courses of stonework having been added most conveniently to only two sides of the pile, thus retaining the original exterior proportions, the basic plan being a few inches out of a perfect square and the apex naturally heightened as dead centre of the conic design. I shall try my own hand at recalling Reisner's explanatory sketch. (See page 107.)

Now it happens that old Cheops or Khufu who was the second king of the 4th Dynasty and reigned probably from 2898 to 2875 B.C., was a particularly healthy specimen who saw his pyramid almost finished for the third time before he was ready for the embalmer; hence two extra additions to its square width and height, whereby the finished structure must have contained little short of 100 million cubic feet of masonry! Its ancient name was Yaket-Khufu, which stood for " Horizon of Khufu ", horizon signifying burial place. Cheops was the Greek form of Khufu, more commonly used in popular accounts of the Great Pyramid than the ancient native form. The fact of its early name and the existence of the sarcophagus in the king's chamber provide unassailable evidence that it was intended to be a tomb. All the fantastic theories that have been invented to " prove " it was erected under the direct inspiration of the Deity to enshrine an historical record of times past and a revelation of things to come—from the creation of the world until its destruction—by means of point-to-point measurements both interior and exterior are quite unworthy the consideration of sensible persons.

" The best answer to these crazy folk," said Reisner to me, " is to be found in the changes that were made in the dimensions of the building during the lifetime of its builder, changes that could not

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have been needed had it been planned from the outset for any esoteric purpose." To which I replied that it would be the simplest thing in the world for one enthusiast to convince another anxious to be gulled that Cheops had been divinely granted increase of years to effect these alterations just to throw the unconscious human builders off the scent. These alterations in the original plan, by the way, can be traced by certain differences in the courses of the stonework.

When I had the privilege of Reisner's enlightening talk on this engrossing subject he had been living for upwards of thirty seasons in his well-equipped bungalow at the Harvard-Boston Camp, close by the Pyramid of Mycerinus, and had explored every corner of the vast-spreading burial grounds of the Pharaohs for his own increase of knowledge as Harvard Professor of Egyptology and the great enrichment of Boston Museum's Egyptian Department, of which he was nominally curator.

But, believe it or not, he told me that in all those years he had not done what I had done the day before, and that was to ascend to the top of the Great Pyramid! He had explored its interior passages and chambers times out of number, however, whereas I contrived but one visit to these and can still smell the loathly odour of the bats that have haunted the King's Chamber for nigh on five thousand years.

And finally I cannot refrain from mentioning that I, who have always held the mystic measuring of the Great Pyramid in derision since I first read Piazzi Smyth's book quite fifty years ago, have had to endure the shame and the pain of seeing one of my own compilations—*Wonders of the Past*, easily the most popular work on archæology, of which large editions were sold in four or five foreign languages—widely publicized in the United States in company with a gift book called *Miracle of the Ages*, which repeats and expands all the moonshine of these Pyramid measurements! It was more than consolation, however, to learn from an American professor of archæology whom I met at Dr. Reisner's that for some years my *Wonders of the Past* in the fine four volumes of Putnam's original American edition had been used not only at Harvard but at many American universities where there were courses in archæology. Even if the scores of thousands of volumes which a later publisher disposed of carried with them the "free gift book", *Miracle of the Ages*, all who read intelligently would be able to form a proper estimate of that detailed guide to the Great Pyramid as a mighty and mysterious "Bible in stone" recording God's plan for man and

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prophesying great events in the future . . . I hope, but oh, the pathos of such misdirected ingenuity !

As a last word on this subject I will add that so far as beauty and impressiveness are concerned there are some dozens of slag heaps on the coalfields around Mons which at first sight are as fine to look upon (distantly) as any of the Pyramids of Gizeh . . . and would serve just as well wherewith to foretell the doom which the Divine Spirit has prepared for this wayward world of His fashioning.

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THOSE UNPROFITABLE PROPHETS

WAR is the breeding time of prophets. It may be that science has so greatly advanced since 1914–18, that, so far, the present War has given birth to fewer " prophets " than the lesser affair of twenty-five years ago. They had a great time then, and one enthusiast, the Rev. Walter Wynn, whose personal interpretations of the Bible prophecies from his pulpit at Chesham United Free Church and in the press attracted large audiences, has lived to see his prophetic interpretations entirely discredited. I felt so sure they would be, like all the rest of them, that I carefully kept his book, *The Bible and the War*, issued in 1918, so that I could check up on it at a later date. Little dreaming, need I add, that I would do that checking up in the midst of a super-Armageddon. A really valuable treatise could be written today by someone who would undertake a review of no more than the mass of prophetic literature which I read in 1914–18. That would be quite a big job, however, and so far as I am personally concerned time presses. I must content myself by attempting no more than a brief glance where I fain would linger. To begin with, let me reproduce from Walter Wynn's little book (unlucky page 13) the following :

" With mind troubled and heart torn by this war, I resolved to read again what the Bible had to say, uninfluenced by anything that had ever been penned about it, and I have come to this broad conclusion : If Christ does not return to this world previous to the year 1935—that is within twenty years from now—no interpretation of the prophecies need call for serious consideration. We can close the subject once for all as unprofitable, and admit that in all probability all the prophecies received their fulfilment in a local and limited sense many centuries ago."

The Rev. Walter Wynn, who is now seventy-seven and gave up his Chesham pulpit nine years ago, may have ceased trying to fit Elijah's mantle, as I have had no news of his attempting to explain away the passage I have quoted. As an honest believer he has no doubt been as good as his word and closed the subject once for all as " unprofitable ". Therein he does not resemble the late Prophet Baxter, who was never discomfited no matter how wrong the events proved his vaticinations. I well remember Baxter's sensational posters in New Bridge Street foretelling the early end of the world and the forthcoming ascension of many thousands of " male

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virgins " to heaven without the bother of dying. His office where I had occasional interviews with him still stands amid encircling ruins, but these thousands of male virgins have either had to experience the pangs of death, as it is forty years since the prophecy in question and the great globe itself has not yet " dissolved " ! Baxter himself died in 1910 with all his " Future Wonders of Scripture Prophecies " unfulfilled.

When Mr. Wynn says that the Hebrew prophecies probably had their fulfilment in a local and limited sense many centuries ago, he is talking good sense, but scores of thousands of credulous readers a quarter of a century ago must have been influenced by his books on *Revelation*, and *The Bible and the War*. To what spiritual issues ?

In closing *The Bible and the War* I notice that the author reprints with praise and enthusiasm one of the " powerful " articles by that great student of Bible prophecies, the late Horatio Bottomley, entitled " The Final Armageddon that is Enthroning Faith ". In this Bottomley says : " We are witnessing Armageddon—the last grim battle of the world ; the last upheaval of the primitive barbarism from which we sprang when the stars first sang together." It is permissible, I think, to ask : How's that for prophecy ?

The Rev. Walter Wynn had a rival in the perilous pursuit of prophecy, named Harold Norris. In *When Will the Lord Return ?* (first edition September 1914) Norris endeavoured to fit on the discarded mantle of the Rev. Grattan Guinness, whose whole ministerial life had been devoted to explaining the Biblical prophecies and who died in 1910 without witnessing the Second Coming which he had confidently expected to hear was at hand from his tireless studies of the prophets. If Mr. Norris survives he must be as disillusioned as Mr. Wynn, for his profound and illuminating enquiry into the dark sayings of the prophets convinced him that the Second Coming would take place *before* 1923, which he categorically calls " our final date ", and adds " We have strong reasons for believing that the return of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, will precede this date ". I am singularly ill-informed in the history of the last thirty years if this statement had any justification. In my opinion those religious writers who become obsessed by the " fulfilment " of the fine imaginative and symbolic images of the old Hebrew poet-prophets are a real menace to the Christian way of life. Mr. Norris in each new edition of his work " reverently and humbly thanks Almighty God for the large and world-wide circulation He has granted this work ", while Mr. Wynn, in *The*

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Bible and the War, more modestly says: "I am very gratified with the reception this little book has had from the Public."

Soon after I had given expression to these personal opinions of mine in a journal edited by me then circulating a million a week, I had heaps of approving letters from readers and additional evidence of the prophetic stuff that was still getting to the ear of the public chiefly through the preachers of a sect whose whole existence is based upon the letter of the Hebrew prophecies, a sect, so far as I can discern, less responsive to the great poetic beauty and the largeness of the spirit that informs these prophecies.

One only of these communications that came to me need be noticed: not the letter itself, but a newspaper clipping which it enclosed from a local paper on the South Coast. Herein was reported at wasteful length a lecture under the heading "Amazing Biblical Prophecy". This farrago of folly was supposed by my reader to wipe my eye after my confessed incredulity concerning alleged Biblical prophecies of events in the present war. The speaker had the nerve to tell his simple-minded hearers that the second chapter of Joel provides a vivid description of a modern tank attack in a way which could not have been more graphically expressed by Richard Dimbleby reporting the descent of the mechanized Huns on Yugoslavia and Greece! He read it, "and his audience was astonished". Well, read it for yourself and see. Joel, one of the shortest Books, is well worth reading in any case, as he had the stuff of the poet-prophet in him albeit of the Minor category. (A preacher for the Sunday was shown into an extremely small room at a Scottish manse one Saturday night. "Here's your bedroom," said the minister's wife, "we call it the prophet's chamber." "Aye," said the visitor dryly, "it must have been provided for one o' the *minor* prophets.")

All that Joel was after was to impress with brilliantly imaginative phrases the terrors of a threatening plague of locusts. "They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run up the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief." Tanks! The whole chapter is full of images that fit locusts (I have known them do these and even more surprising things in South America and in North Africa), but it has nothing on earth to do with the exploits of German tanks in 1940, or better British tanks in 1943. Yet that's the stuff which modern prophetmongers get the gullible to lap up.

Although the more blatant type of these prophet-expounders is less in evidence during the present War there are some on the old

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tack about Armageddon, quite unabashed that it had been worked to death in 1914–18. "Armageddon would be fought in three spheres, the earth, the sea and the sky—the land warfare centring and culminating in Palestine," said the learned lecturer in that seaside town. Any schoolboy could tell us that! Again "No peace plan in the present conflict could be hoped for *because* the Bible prophesied that the conflict would grow more terrible and bitter". Anybody with a grain of sense can prophesy that, but it needs less than a grain of sense to identify the cockatrice and the flying fiery serpent of the Bible with—poison gas! Which this interpreter does. Thus is the imagery of the fine poet-prophets of Israel distorted and fitted to the fiery fancies of those latter-day exponents, who surely must do harm in disturbing the minds of all who accept their sensationalism without turning to the sources on which it is supposed to be founded. "Always verify your references" was the sage advice of the famous Lord Salisbury. That is particularly necessary when considering Bible prophecies at secondhand.

And then (just as in 1914) we have had a revival of interest in that strange old sixteenth-century French physician who called himself Nostradamus. James Laver has even written a book (which I have not seen) about him and refurbished his versified vaticinations, while an elaborate "interest film" was put on in the cinemas from an American source: this latter, I feel sure, to the mental confusion of the great thoughtless film-thronging public, it was so well done as special pleading. A correspondent who has devoted himself through forty years to the study of things to come (I am convinced of his absolute sincerity, but of nothing more) told me that he has never seen a copy of Nostradamus. Well, I got three editions from the London Library and settled down with them for an hour or two one night when all was quiet, no bombers going over. The earliest edition was 1720, the latest 1875, and the one to which I gave most of my attention was the Paris edition of 1840 fully annotated in pencil by some unknown English author who had himself written an unnamed book on prophecy. There are many astonishing quatrains in the ten sequences of "Centuries" and as a literary curiosity Nostradamus is certainly worth more study than I have been able to give him.

Especially am I impressed with his topographical knowledge—in itself surprising for a writer of the mid-sixteenth century—but I am certain from all I can gather in my cursory examination of this strange and intriguing book that he never heard of Hitler or of Vichy, and I have no use for a prophet who in 1555 pretended to

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know the future even beyond our own times but missed the significance of that man and that place! I'd rather re-read Maeterlinck's *The Unknown Guest*, which I'm taking to bed tonight, as I find the Belgian poet-essayist the most persuasive of all sensible students of the mysterious phenomena of premonitions and foretellings. Even when we may not agree with his conclusions we are held by the charm of his style.

Before turning in, however, I am tempted to add by way of tail-piece to this chapter, a paragraph or two about the menace of the astrologers which was growing on the eve of the War and went on "swelling visibly" until the collapse of France, when the subsequent paper famine rather than any change of editorial heart in the popular press squeezed out most of these garrulous guessers at the message of the stars.

So long as the astrology craze amused people and they didn't take it seriously, perhaps no great harm resulted. There is certainly entertainment value in it. But when one read the announcement at the annual convention of the American Federation of Scientific (*sic*) Astrologers, held in the Autumn of 1941, that "Hitler's star is setting; he is on the downgrade; his move on Russia was a great mistake; and although *we cannot predict the date* of his defeat, it is certain that *if* the U.S. enters the War before next spring he is doomed", one was moved less by amusement than derision and contempt. No stars were needed to tell us these things, and the words I have italicized indicate the quackery of the business in its higher reaches. This I pointed out at the time; but when these "scientific" astrologers have their first post-War convention we can be assured they will recall that reading of the stars of 1941, though every writer on the War at that time had expressed a similar opinion before the stars had had a chance.

Then, again, observe this gem of about the same date from an English exponent of the so-called science: "There can be no doubt of the tension which I predicted would be upon us this week-end. If you feel anxious, please remember that the tide of battle now turning cannot but make for nervousness. The main thing is that the tide goes now in *our* direction.". The stars told him that! And also "terrific news is on the way from France". The real sources of his knowledge were many millions of miles nearer than the nearest star: what the wireless calls "agency messages".

Occasionally in an idle moment, to test these scanners of the firmament I have looked at the daily horoscope of my birthday, and while admiring the adroitness with which the words are framed

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to suit almost any human creature born anywhere on earth on any of the 365 days which go to make a year, I have never struck one that I could identify with my own particular case. This is an example: "Memorable week-end. New opportunities for contact with interesting people. Welcome news arrives by post, but watch £ s. d." Wrong on every point, so far as I am concerned. But little these bright lads reck: they eat their own words as easily, and with as great a relish, as their steak and kidney pie.

Listen to another of the fraternity glibly interpreting the stars for May 1942: "The passing of the two of the major planets from Taurus into Gemini in May will entirely alter the course of the war. The conjunction of Saturn and Uranus will destroy the conditions that began in 1935 and reached a climax in 1939. This spring and summer will witness the destruction of the Nazi regime, and the removal of Germany and Italy from the ranks of our enemies. Moreover, an even more welcome change will follow the passing of Saturn and Uranus out of Taurus, for we shall finally free ourselves from the hampering and restricting influences that have held us in check since the beginning of the war, and shall be in a position to follow a policy of vigorous offence." I will only comment on this excerpt which I've taken from an article on the Astrological Outlook by Vivian B. Robson, B.Sc., in *The Queen* for March 25, 1942, by expressing the hope that these most desirable things may happen in a year from my present writing (May 1943), while stating my conviction that Saturn and Uranus will have no more to do with the course of events than Flanagan and Allen.

Not one "astrologer" on this planet—not one, I repeat—foresaw the date of the War: without exception they divined the message of the stars as making for Peace. I defy the whole brood of them to predict the date of its end! Science, indeed! Modern astrology has the same relationship to science as the spotting of winners for the 3.30. That, and no more. But in ancient times, before it was discovered that the earth was not the fixed centre of the universe with the sun and moon and multitudinous stars circling about it, an element of primitive science was not absent, and out of it the true science of astronomy was eventually born. The abracadabra in which its exponents deal today dates back to the dark ages before astronomy, to times when even the finest intellects in Ancient Rome believed in signs and portents, and looked for revelations in the reeking entrails of sacrificial animals. . . .

And so to bed carrying *The Unknown Guest*!

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THE FUN OF PHILOLOGY

THE charm of word study is something which the ordinary reader can share with the expert. In this matter I rank myself with the ordinary reader, by making no pretensions to expert knowledge. But from my early youth I have experienced much pleasure in the casual study of words. One of my boyhood's memories is the sensation of discovering for myself the meaning of " antimacassar ". I wondered why those Victorian things of lace and linen pinned on the backs of easy chairs had this funny name, until one day I saw an advertisement of Rowland's Macassar Hair Oil, and in a flash I understood, as I knew the meaning of the prefix " anti ". Indeed, I think it was this simple discovery that awakened in me what has become an abiding interest in word-origins.

To illustrate how any reader who possesses a good dictionary may share this endless delight of word study, I purpose discussing a few curious words so commonly in use that the ordinary reader has probably never given them a thought. Take Album, for instance. Did you ever imagine that it means " a white tablet " ? I'm sure you didn't, unless you are a Latin scholar. But when you know that, you can understand how it has come to signify a book of blank pages.

Look up Artichoke and you will discover that " Jerusalem artichoke " has nothing whatever to do with Palestine. The name arose from the popular mispronunciation of an Italian word *girasole*, meaning " sunflower " (a secondary consequence of this misapprehension, by the way, was the giving of the name Palestine to a soup made of such artichokes). A somewhat similar example of confusion is seen in the proper name Geneva being bestowed upon gin. Actually the word Gin is derived from the Dutch *genever*, from the old French *genèvre*, from the Latin *juniperus*, being a spirit distilled from grain and flavoured with juniper berries. Thus gin has no more connection with Geneva than the artichoke has with Jerusalem.

Popular misconceptions of this kind are common enough, but one sometimes comes upon them in unexpected places. Thus I was surprised to find that a distinguished Royal Academician appeared to be ignorant of the etymology and real meaning of the word Miniature. Supposing it to be derived from the Latin *minimus*, very small, he thought it meant merely a portrait or picture executed on an extremely small scale. But it is derived from the Latin

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minium, red lead—a carmine or vermilion pigment largely used in the illumination of manuscripts. As in the nature of things pictures in such illuminated manuscripts were on a very small scale, the gradual misapplication of the word is intelligible.

So common a word as Baluster has a remote and unexpectedly beautiful origin. It has come to us by way of Latin, Italian and French, from a Greek word meaning "flower of wild pomegranate". Then just think of Bandbox. You know it is a box. But whence the "band"? It was originally a box in which a clergyman kept his "bands". Banting belongs to an extensive order of words derived from the names of persons who invented things or processes, or were originally identified in some way with certain actions, such as Boycotting.

And don't you think it curious that the origin of the word Bible is directly traceable to *biblos*, which means the inner bark of papyrus? We all know that in the ancient world papyrus was used for writing upon, and very slight modifications have turned the Egyptian word into the English word Paper. But the Greeks, borrowing the Egyptian word *biblos*, developed it into *biblia*, meaning a collection of writings, the change thence to the universal term for the Holy Scriptures being an easy transition.

One of the most uncommon words in its development is Bleach. It is surprising that at one time a word so unmistakably associated in all our minds with a process of making white, could ever at any time have been related to the making of something black. And yet the Old English word *blac*, signifying shining (like fire) and pale, and its opposite *blaec* (from which is derived Black), which meant dark, as though burnt black, or scorched by fire, would both appear to have sprung from the same root.

But for a striking change of significance it would be difficult to pick a better example than we find in Belfry. Ask any person what a Belfry is and he will correctly answer "a tower in which bells are hung". Yet originally it had nothing to do with the ringing of bells. It is only in Modern English that it has assumed this particular meaning, the Modern French word *beffroi* being still very close to the Middle English word *berfray*, and both were derived from a source which meant a watch-tower or a place of protection. It was natural to hang bells in these towers to be rung at times of alarm, and eventually, in more peaceful times, to ring out the passing hours. So we can see how easy the transition from *berfray* to Belfry came about in the English use of the word.

A much larger number of readers will be familiar with the word

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Bedlam than with any of the others on which I have been commenting. It is merely an old form of Bethlehem and it is to be found so written in late Middle English. It has come to signify an asylum for the mentally afflicted because of the old London hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem having been devoted to that purpose. That ancient institution still exists in the form of the Bethlehem Royal Hospital (now removed from Lambeth to Beckenham), which, however, in our more sensitive days is seldom called by the unpleasant name of Bedlam. But, whenever one notes a reference to " a regular bedlam ", or to somebody who is described as " fit for bedlam ", there is no mistaking the meaning.

Calculate, also, is a word worth looking up. I'm sure we seldom think that in " calculating " we are going back to an ancient game of draughts played by the Romans with counters of stone. The Latin word *calculus*, meaning a small stone, is a diminutive of *calx*, a stone. Chapel, too, has a quaint derivation from Low Latin, signifying a cloak or hood. The cloak of St. Martin of Tours was a sacred relic preserved in a sanctuary, and that is why the familiar " chapel " later came to mean a sanctuary containing relics.

Hardly less noteworthy than any of these is Canter. This dates back to the days of the Canterbury pilgrims, the phrase " Canterbury pace " being an allusion to the slow rate at which the pilgrims rode along the Kentish highway to our national shrine. And have you ever wondered what association there is between the noun Cashier and the verb Cashier? They have no relationship whatever. One knows, perhaps, that the English word Cashier was probably derived from the French *caissier*, meaning a person in charge of a *caisse* or cashbox. But when we talk of a person being Cashiered, we are really using an English-made word derived from a Dutch term *kasseren*, which, in turn, emerged from the French *casser*, to break or shatter, and the French had an obvious Latin original.

Cad offers a good example of how a word in the course of its career may degenerate and acquire a " bad " meaning. This offensive term is merely an abbreviation of the French word *cadet*, a junior. If you are a golfer you may be comforted to know that your caddie is so called, not because he might possess any of the characteristics of a cad, but simply because he is in some sort an inferior servant. Two further examples of such degeneration are worth examining in the words Craft and Cunning.

Of the three, Cunning has fallen lowest. Derived from the old English *cunnan*, " to know, be able ", it first connoted knowledge

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and the skill that comes from experience. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning" is the Psalmist's protestation as rendered by the translators in the Authorized Version of the Bible and no imputation is made against the morality of the "cunning men" who invented the engines that Uzziah made in Jerusalem, as recorded in the Second Book of the Chronicles. Yet already the word was acquiring the bad significance of slyness which Shakespeare attributed to it in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* when he makes Valentine speak of the cunning manner of his planned flight with Silvia. Today its original "good" signification is almost entirely lost since it usually implies a quality of duplicity.

Craft, from the Old Saxon and Old High German *Kraft*, meaning power, originally had only the good signification of skill or power. Yet at an early date this old sense became obsolete and the word came to connote mental ability maliciously and dishonestly used, as in the phrase "the craft and subtlety of the devil or man". Its degeneration was, indeed, carried further than that of Cunning; for whereas the latter signifies dexterity exercised simply by concealment, by reserve, or, at most, by dissimulation, Craft implies active simulation—deliberate shaping of words and actions in order to lull suspicion as to the object pursued. But the word has become specialized in another direction, for it also implies special skill or dexterity as displayed in some particular art, or manual work, and hence, secondarily, a trade or employment demanding highly trained manual dexterity, but not necessarily æsthetic perception, thus differing from an art on the one hand and from unskilled labour on the other. By retaining thus much of its honourable use the moral reputation of the noun Craft may be considered saved. But the degeneration of its cognate adjective Crafty is complete, its only connotation now being skilled in deception, subtly cunning and deceitful.

I have found much to interest me in the group of words derived from the Latin *gens*—Gentle, with its variants Genteel and Gentile, Gentility, Gentleman, Gentlewoman and the rest. Some sort of class consciousness, almost amounting to what is known as snobbishness, seems to have affected the common use of all these words in one way or another. Gentle, for example, means primarily "belonging to the same family or stock", without differentiation of social status, but quite early it acquired the more restricted signification of good birth and breeding, the "gentle" being the well-born members of a community as contrasted with the "simple" of humble rank. Whereas in the eighteenth century Genteel

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denoted politeness, good breeding and distinction in manners and appearance, it is now either a vulgarism when used seriously in that sense or an ironically contemptuous term for an affected refinement that apes the manners of a so-called superior class.

The noun Gentility has fared no better, and common usage is steadily depreciating the value of the word Gentleman, as it has that of Lady. Only Gentlewoman seems to have escaped this dishonouring process—seems, indeed, to have undergone the contrary process and attained to higher dignity, for whereas formerly it signified a female attendant upon a woman of rank, it is the mistress now who is proud to be called the gentlewoman and her maid who insists upon being called a lady. For Gent, except as a written word with a full point after it to show it is an abbreviation of Gentleman, and then only to be used when there really is no room into which to squeeze the other five letters, there is nothing too bad to be said. As a spoken word, used colloquially as a synonym for Gentleman, it is an unpardonable vulgarism. "What is a 'gent'?" a learned judge asked irritably, being properly annoyed by a witness's constant use of the monstrosity. "Something short of a gentleman," a witty Counsel replied.

A most suggestive word to ponder over is Idiot. We get it from the Greek *idiōtēs*, signifying a private person, or one not engaged in public life; as opposed, that is, to one holding public office and taking his share in the management of public affairs. In that flowering time of Greek culture, two and a half millenniums ago, an active participation in the public affairs of his city-state was the prime interest of every patriotic Greek, and anyone who failed in this was discredited as an ignorant, inept creature, intellectually undeveloped. The transition was easy from that secondary sense of the word Idiot to our present use of it, denoting a person of such defective intellect as to be incapable of rational action or judgement.

The word Tory may serve to suggest a line of thought with which not all my readers are familiar—namely, the history and the moral significance implicit in the names which are attached to various movements and the groups of men who have made or controlled them. Archbishop Trench has a most interesting passage on this subject in his classic *On the Study of Words*. He divides these names into three classes: the names that the members of the party gave themselves; those which were imposed on them by others but never recognized by themselves; and those which, first imposed by others, were in course of time admitted and allowed by themselves.

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As an example of the first he cites Gnostics, a name devised by that sect in the first centuries of our era as a declaration of their claim to possess mystical knowledge lacked by the rest of the world; reversely the word Agnostic was coined by Professor T. H. Huxley in the middle of last century. Examples of names which were invented by others and never accepted by those to whom they were attached are Quaker, Puritan and Roundhead, and sectarianism has been responsible for many other instances of a like kind.

Tory is an example of the third class, Whig also, and it is really instructive to observe how some nicknames which originally were inspired by the bitterest party hatred were accepted—at first possibly in a spirit of almost contemptuous defiance—by those to whom they were applied, ultimately to become almost terms of honour. Perhaps the most notable example of this within recent years is the name "Old Contemptibles" applied scornfully by the Kaiser to the little British Army that took up his challenge: an appellation held in high honour since 1914.

One of Trench's lectures is devoted to a consideration of the history in words, and he points out how the English language bears the footprints of great revolutions profoundly impressed upon it, by means of which we may carry on moral and historical researches precisely analogous to those the geologist pursues in the different strata and deposits of the rocks to arrive at a knowledge of the successive physical changes through which an area has passed. Thus, he points out, there was a time when the languages which the English and the Norman severally spoke existed side by side, but still unmingled, the one that of the great body of the people, the other that of the small dominant class. By degrees, with the reconciliation and partial fusion of the two races, the two languages blended, one indeed prevailing over the other, but incorporating a number of the words of the other. For a time duplicate words for many things existed, but in popular speech two words to designate the same thing do not long survive together, and from the survival of the English or the Norman word it is possible to do a great deal towards the reconstruction of our history, so far as it turns upon the Norman Conquest.

Hence almost all the words associated with dignity, state, honour, and pre-eminence, such as duke, count, royalty, sceptre and others, are of Norman origin, as also are those denoting articles of luxury, or associated with the chase, with chivalry, with personal adornment. On the other hand, great features of nature—the sun, moon

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and stars, earth, water and fire, the divisions of time, such as year, month and day, spring, summer and winter, the prime social relations such as father, mother, wife, brother and sister, and all the simpler emotions of the mind are of native growth and unborrowed from Norman or Latin sources.

Trench reminds us how Wamba, the Saxon jester in Scott's *Ivanhoe*, commented on the fact that the names of almost all animals, so long as they are alive, are Saxon, but when cooked and prepared for food become Norman—a not surprising fact, since the Saxon hind had the duty of tending and feeding the creatures while the pleasure of eating them was the privilege of his Norman lord. Thus ox and steer and cow are Saxon, but beef is Norman; calf is Saxon and veal Norman; sheep Saxon, mutton Norman. And so, too, with swine and pork, deer and venison, fowl and pullet. Here, embedded in our language, is historical evidence of the relative social status of the two peoples. Yet while the Saxon was for a season an inferior and oppressed race, the stable elements of English life made good their claim to be the groundwork of the after nation as of the after language.

From words, again, such as alembic, alkali, alchemy, azimuth, algebra, cipher, we might learn that it was the Arabs who were the chemists, astronomers and arithmeticians of the Middle Ages, and from words such as anchorite, ascetic, cenobite, monastery and monk that the origins of the monastic system are to be sought in the Greek and not in the Latin branch of the Church; all the words, with hardly any exception, that express the constituent elements of the system being Greek and not Latin. Many single words also can yield historical data. Think of pagan and paganism, heathen and sacrament, and your thoughts will be carried back to the earliest stages in the life of the Church. In the days of the Roman Republic, *sacramentum* was a juridical technical term for the sum of money which the two parties to a lawsuit were required to deposit, engaging themselves to one another, and it was so called because the loser of the suit forfeited his pledge for sacred temple uses, or perhaps more correctly—according to Lewis and Short—because the money was deposited in a sacred place. It next appears as a military technical term for the preliminary attestation made by newly enlisted troops, followed afterwards by the proper military oath of allegiance or *jusjurandum*, which was at first voluntary, but after the Second Punic War was exacted by the military tribune. After that time—that is, from about 215 B.C.—*sacramentum* was used as an equivalent for the *jusjurandum*, and owing to the binding nature

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of the oath the term gradually became applied to any solemn oath whatsoever.

It was in this sense that the Christian Church first adopted the word, applying it to any act of special solemnity or sanctity, and, above all, to such mysteries as included more than met eye or ear. Thus the Incarnation was a sacrament, and so was the lifting up of the Brazen Serpent, the giving of the Manna, and many things besides those rites which are now recognized as the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. Our present limitation of the word to those two rites " ordained by Christ Himself as generally necessary to salvation, namely, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord ", seems to acquire new interest when we perceive how it preserves two of the earliest meanings of this ancient word, the promises made in baptism to " fight manfully under Christ's banner and to continue His faithful soldiers and servants unto our life's end ", reminding us of the solemn pledge given by the Roman soldier to his commanding officer, while the term is applied to the Holy Eucharist because of its mystic character.

It would be amusing to keep notes of speculative derivations when one comes across them. One of the wildest concerns the word Bumper, whose etymology does not usually appear in dictionaries. I saw it in a manuscript notebook in which a hundred years ago a young lady of literary inclinations wrote down passages from books which interested her—odd scraps of information, little anecdotes, short poems and so on. The Italians, I learn from this source, were in the habit of beginning their after-dinner potations by drinking the health of the pope, and ceremonially raised full glasses to the toast of " Le bon père "—whence, according to this authority, our word Bumper. Why the Italians toasted the Holy Father in French instead of in Italian, or perhaps in ecclesiastical Latin, is not explained and leaves me unconvinced.

Lascelles Abercrombie, in a tract on Colloquial Language in Literature, published by the Society for Pure English, quoting a friend, raises the question whether literature is the great enemy of language. The friend resents the denunciation by literati of usages which do not conform to strict grammatical rules as laid down by the schoolmen of long ago. He mentions various usages which are condemned by the pundits but which he regards as exquisite contrivances for giving subtle shades of meaning, the split infinitive, for example, the use of substantives as epithets, and the employment of various expressions which, while natural and instantly intelligible, are " incorrect " according to the schoolmen and pedants. What

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will always appeal to the literary artist in colloquialisms, as Abercrombie rightly says, is their extraordinary potential energy. While there must be insistence upon the dignity of letters, anything that interferes with the flexibility of language is to be deprecated. The business of the conservators of the stream of literature is to keep its waters pure but not to lessen its flow.

One evidence of the way in which the market-place defies the authority of the academy is the variation that occurs in the accepted meaning of words. Some of them undergo a process of degeneration, some of them are raised to more honourable estate. Instances of both kinds I have already given. Sometimes reasons for the fluctuation in meaning are comparatively easy to discover. Sometimes they seem to be entirely capricious and to be dictated by some ephemeral fad or affectation of which the immediate cause has long been forgotten. A good example of a word of the latter kind is Nice. It will, I think, surprise many people to learn that Nice is derived from the Latin *nescius*, meaning not knowing or ignorant. In the fifteenth century, however, foolish, not wise, senseless, were the accepted meanings. Then in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it acquired significations which are quite obsolete now, although in the seventeenth-century interpretation of it as fastidious, the transition to its present uses is marked. Even in our own lifetime the word was one of those by the use of which the social status of people was roughly assessed. One could say that a word had nice shades of meaning or that a drawer fitted nicely; but to say that a woman looked nice or a convalescent invalid was doing nicely was regarded by the pundits as intolerable. It would be hard to find a better example of the failure of the schoolman to impose tyranny upon the man in the street.

Long before reaching this point my reader will have realized that all I have been doing is casually to turn over the pages of a dictionary, dipping into one here, another there, and skipping scores at a time, with the purpose of "spotting" a word now and then, whose origins and associations are such as to make it worthy of more than a passing glance. Obviously, those to which, in this very casual way, my attention has been attracted represent the tiniest sheaf gleaned from a vast field of far-stretching acres. If my reader has shared my interest in the process and is aware that he has also derived some entertainment and increase of knowledge, he may set about gleaning for himself; at least it is in that hope I have written this introduction to a field of study where both interest and new knowledge are always waiting to be found.

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MY SOUVENIRS OF GERMANY

Occasionally it is salutary to revise one's opinions: to realize how time may have changed them. Particularly in the appreciation of modern poetry and also Post-Impressionism in painting I have had of late to abandon quite callously opinions for which at one time I might have gone to the stake . . . well, metaphorically. I am glad of this, as there is no surer sign of continuing life than the readiness to jettison old ideas. There lies the good sense of the scientists: they are ever ready to throw overboard a whole cargo of conclusions shipped years ago in good faith, the moment that some new discovery has made these obsolete. That is why hidebound theologians who hold fast to stone-dead dogmas and discredited doctrines fail to understand the scientific mind and quite honestly misrepresent the greatest discoveries of science in defending philosophic ideas that were tenable centuries, nay thousands of years ago, but have been long exploded by the fearless, questing, unresting minds of scientific investigators. Fortunately for the modern church there are not a few of its abler expositors eager to accept the findings of the scientists on the understanding that these are no more than steps towards a fuller understanding of natural laws the complete comprehension of which is never likely to be attained by the human mind. Only the stand-still Fundamentalists of Tennessee are convinced that nothing changes in a world which to all intelligent observers is changing with every hour that passes.

But there I go again, heading for deep waters and chasing thoughts that could be pursued through whole volumes, whereas just now I mean briefly to comment on a subject of microscopic importance and essentially personal interest: nothing more vital than my own reaction to the changing world of the cinema! I have to confess that, thanks to that extra hour of summertime, I have recently recaptured my old interest in the motion picture. I had lost it for a time owing to the difficulties of the blackout which kept me indoors at theatre time and also because in the first two years of the War a not undesirable blight seemed to descend upon the proliferation of Hollywood and Elstree. The new uncertainties of life held up production and the release of new films just then completed could not be ventured while cinemas were being bombed almost as frequently as hospitals and many that escaped had shut their doors.

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During the raid-free months, however, there has been a revival, and I have found myself again, with more than occasional satisfaction, spending the two hours or so that a full-length film demands, but the balance of years that remain for me is too short to allow of my sitting out such a long-winded production as *Gone With the Wind*. Life is really too brief to risk even so little as two hours of it on what may prove an inane and tasteless show: better to spend the time in reading, in talking to some intelligent person, or in sleeping—which I understand is no less uncommon a thing in cinemas than it used to be in churches. "Which church do you sleep in?" asked Mark Twain. The film-seer who goes regularly and takes what of good or bad the producers offer him is a poor creature for whom life must be a great emptiness which can never be filled with anything more tangible than increase of emptiness.

No form of excitement demands more pre-consideration than the cinema: it is wise to consult friends who have seen a film and on whose judgement you can rely before venturing a waste of time even upon the recommendation of a professional critic. Better still, to have a friend who is "crazy on films" and tells you of those you *must* see, but for whose opinion you wouldn't give a button, and by noting his (more often her) favourites keep away from them with deliberation. There are few professional critics whose notes are worth reading for anything but their value as chronicles. The fingers of one hand could number the writers whose criticisms offer real guidance. Most of them, in this baleful age of boosting, are employed merely to "write up" the shows that advertise most lavishly in their papers: just like the motor critics in pre-War days, and much the same as the modern book-boosters who have been threatening to displace the more serious literary critics, though, happily, a goodly and growing company of these is still active.

Look at the advertised excerpts from the film notices and book reviews. There is always at least one high-sounding phrase worked in with the hope that the advertiser will seize upon it, for these writers love to see their names in the advertising columns: "The greatest film since Edison's first movies! says CLARENCE COHEN in *The Daily Screech*"—"The most absorbing work of fiction since Dickens laid down his pen—ISAAC MCISAAC, in *The Sunday Blether*." You know the sort of thing I mean. Indeed this brand of publicity, whose early death may fortunately be predicted from lack of paper, had arrived at a point where the author of a new book often got far less publicity from his publishers' advertising than two or three of the boosters whose names made "tops" in the bill. Needless

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to add, it is American by birth : it dates from the growth of film-fanning in a country where values are still vague. The unbridled lying by ad-writers for American books, whose methods are precisely those of the proprietors of the latest panaceas for hair-restoring, new lease of life, and ingrowing toe-nails, has only in a very modified form proved capable of transplanting in England. America has always produced an immensely larger percentage than Britain of " saps " who will buy things simply because the advertisements speak highly of them, or do things because someone who will benefit if his advice is followed tells them to . . . adapting a line from Private Atkins in *Iolanthe* : " They buy just as the advertisers tell 'em to."

My old friend, that brilliant publisher, Grant Richards, once tried unconventional publicity for a poet, Charles Whitworth Wynne, whose volume of verse *Ad Astra* he brought out very early in the century. (I know he is not very proud of the stunt, but it is worth recording in the annals of publishing.) I remember a long row of sandwichmen parading the gutters of the Strand with yellow posters telling the passers-by to read *Ad Astra* (which contained some very well turned verse, by the way), but I fear that it was a vain appeal to " All ye who pass by ". At least it didn't set a fashion for putting the new poets across on a non-poetry-loving public. Still, it was the first effort at applying commercial advertising to literary wares.

Now I have to confess that these reflections have been prompted by nothing more urgent than discovering some fragments in my folder of travel notes, which take me back to Nuremberg in 1926 and its " Lu-Li " cinema. Here it is, written on the notepaper of the Grand Hotel hard by the station there :

" It was in the gloaming hour, when it is still too early to think of dressing for dinner and too late to take tea, if perchance one has missed that office of the traveller's day, that I found myself sauntering the storied streets of Nuremberg. In the gloaming hour in most of the great sinful cities the satyrs may be seen furtively eyeing the inconstant nymphs of the pavement, still hoping for the eventide if not the afternoon of a faun ; but disdaining the suggestion of satyr and distantly removed, alas, from faunhood, did what I so often do in a foreign town, and so rarely in London—I turned into a cinema.

" I am an old lover of the cinema : it must be nearly a quarter of a century since I welcomed it with delight, when it was unsophisticated and was devoted exclusively to comics, travel and education, the last really including the second. Was greater pleasure

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ever spread throughout the world than that afforded by the misadventures of Max Linder? I laughed at his primeval absurdities in many a cinema of many a land and felt refreshed, but with the coming of the silent drama and the effort to make the cinema a rival of the stage I forsook it. Fortunately for the cinema my defection was made good several millions of times by those who wanted 'drama' . . . And Max is dead, and no longer is the old formula—the steadily growing crowd chasing the protagonist of comic misfortune down endless vistas—honoured by the American tradesmen who *pro*-juice their self-advertised masterpieces of the shadow stage. No; these fellows seem to know their business and it would appear that in giving the public drama they are giving the public either what it wants or what it does not resent, which is perhaps as near as the public ever gets to knowing what it really does want.

"It was getting drama at the Lu-Li Lichtspielhaus that gloaming hour in Nuremberg—where the twisting streets of fanciful façades, and antique churches, seem to fuse into a harmony of all that was ever lovable in old German culture. Memories of the romantic and the beautiful crowd upon the mind with thoughts of Albert Dürer, Melanchthon, Adam Kraft, Hans Sachs and the Meistersingers, the old clock-and-toy-makers, unstifled by the modern accretions, for the ancient walls still enclose so many of these grey old things that distil in our senses a wistfulness for the times when they were born. According ill with this, I must admit, is the jazz music at the hotel, where a new race of young Huns are jigging around just as the young in every big city of the world are doing today . . ."

There ended what I had written. No name is given to the screen show at the "Lu-Li", a very new and very Americanized cinema, but it must have been *The Son of the Sheik* that I saw. I have no recollection of it other than much mounting and dismounting, and galloping through sunlit glades on a superb horse by Rudolph Valentino. I was no fan of his or of any other at that time, and had seen him but once in *The Four Horsemen*, for I found myself quite unable to accept with pleasure any of the early crude efforts at telling a story on the screen, a prejudice which kept me out of cinemas for years afterwards. But as we neared the Second Great War I found the art had made such astonishing strides that I swung to the other extreme and was more often film-seeing than play-going, and I doubt not that a time must come when the film play will conquer, as it is possible in the hands of a great producer to provide a perfect whole in which every player will be seen only at his or

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her best. And during the War I have seen several screen plays that have at least approached that ideal, notably *Rebecca*, and—best of all—*Citizen Kane*.

I once had the opportunity of a "close up" in actual life of Valentino. That was in 1925, when he came to London to see the première of *The Eagle* and received a frenetic ovation such as Hitler used to get at the annual conference of the Nazis in Nuremberg. The place: the Café de Paris, where his party had the next table to our own. He seemed to me one of the least graceful waltzers on the dancing floor: "You should have seen his coat-tails flying!" He needed a horse to give him dignity and purpose, I thought. And when I saw that film in Nuremberg, poor Valentino had been dead for two months, aged thirty-one.

And I've seen the Café de Paris, of many happy memories, and the Rialto above it, where I made my first and final screen appearance in *Forgotten Men*, destroyed by Hitler's bombs—that Hitler who in 1926 had just finished the revision of *Mein Kampf* and was less than a year out of Landsberg am Lech prison! Oh, that Valentino had had his fill of years and honours, and Hitler (who was only five years older) had died instead of him in 1925. What a better place to live in would the world have been today!

There were some other pages of travel-impressions written at the same time as the foregoing notes on Nuremberg and among them a note on the holy city of the Nazis which I am tempted to subjoin. It would seem that my intention had been to expand these notes into a travel talk about that particular journey, but like so many minor projects of mine it had to give way before the more urgent work of editing the *Universal History of the World* which had taken me to Berlin for consultation with certain of the curators of its admirable museums and especially the keepers of the archæological collections at the New Museum, where it should be recorded I found no one who spoke (or cared to speak) English or French, and my German being very inadequate I had to carry on all my negotiations in Italian! When I was there the semi-literate Corporal Hitler was in the very act of finishing the second volume of *Mein Kampf* and the Nazi movement was vastly increasing its strength, though I saw nothing of it nor heard anything about it in those tranquil days I spent at Dresden, Nuremberg, Munich and Rothenberg in October 1926, after my researches in Berlin. Here are the further notes of which I have spoken:

"Thanks to a stupid young man in a Berlin *Reise Bureau* I find myself with an extra day on my hands in Munich. An October day,

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with a nipping air and melancholy little whirlings of fallen sycamore leaves in every street.

" The Orient Express that is to take me so willing a passenger to Paris comes out of the east and goes west in the evening, not in the morning, as that blundering young Berliner assured me. ' He was sure a fine man ' said the Hall Porter of the Regina Palast when I told him. You will detect the spread of American culture in the phrase.

" At any time in my life, until a week ago, had I been told that I should have still another day to stay in Munich, it would have made a commensurate addition to my anticipation of pleasure. So that when you behold me impatient to depart from a town which I had so long wished to visit, you will suspect disappointment.

" One's impression of places are affected by so many casual things that the process whereby one has been impressed should always be revealed. I have been a wanderer of cities throughout all Europe and the two Americas for more than thirty years, but three cities of renown I had not seen until these October days—Dresden, Nuremberg and Munich. And my disappointment has been crescendo in the order given although I trust I am in no way insensible to the beauty which they all possess.

" So I must explain : at least as far as one can convey a feeling that may be alien to the sensitivity of another.

" The lure that brought me to Dresden and Munich was their splendid treasure of ancient and modern art. Of this I have had much intellectual joy and profit, but while I knew that Nuremberg had little to offer of the art of classical or medieval times, I had long cherished a mental panorama of its Gothic quaintness. The mere mention of its name opened magic doors in my memory of things unseen but intensely imagined, through which wondrous crazy gabled houses in strange twisty alleys loomed grey and mysteriously beautiful. Enough surely to make one, travelling from Dresden to Munich, step aside for a day or two.

" And the Dresden of my imagination did not require the astonishing jewels of the Grünes Gewolbe, a veritable Aladdin's Cave of fantastic wealth, nor any of the antique treasures of its museums to repay the trouble of a visit, for was it not the gay capital of Saxony, a city of noble buildings and storied streets, the Florence of Germany, where life was joyous and the visitor longed to remain for the rest of his days ?

" Then the Munich of my fancy—based upon many a half-remembered description—was even more a resort of all things

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joyous: the wine restaurants and beer halls with the singing students and the thrifty but hearty burghers draining their tankards like red-blooded men with a true relish of life, and music everywhere, and in the streets—those streets of magnificent distances—the throb and rhythm of happy life.

"It seemed a fortunate circumstance then that united the need to explore the justly famed collections of the Dresden and the Munich galleries with a savouring of the rich and abundant life of these historic cities . . . and here I am regretting that the Orient Express leaves in the evening and not in the morning so that the extra hours I shall linger in Munich will be lost to Paris which I am visiting for perhaps the seventieth time.

"For—yes, I shall say it brazenly—I would not exchange so little as a thousand yards of the Boulevard des Italiens for all the streets of Dresden, Nuremberg and Munich put together: only so far as this matter of 'life' is concerned, be it noted.

"Let me not be misunderstood—this Munich is a superb city. I think of such cities as Glasgow, Liverpool, Philadelphia, or even Buenos Aires, and Munich is, by comparison, a queen city of architectural splendour. But it requires more than beautiful buildings to make a town individual, and that is what I have sought in vain in this arid city of palaces: individuality, character. There is no street in Munich where, walking its pavements, you could not imagine yourself anywhere else. Perhaps the liveliest of its highways, that which stretches from the Karl gate to the more ancient Isar gate, has a touch of character in the abundance of old churches along its northern side set off with a superabundance of great beer-houses on its southern side. But despite their varied and seldom jejune architecture, these wide, orderly, and far-stretching highways merely leave one with an impression of modernity: perhaps the pretentiousness of a smallish state that at one time thought imperially. There is indeed a sense of an empire manqué in this city: it seems too large, too splendid, for its population. . . ."

Such was my impression of what is now Hitler's holy city, which but two years earlier was about to be declared the capital of an independent Catholic Bavaria, when Hitler and Ludendorff appeared in the Burgerbräu Keller and broke up the representative gathering of Bavarian leaders assembled under their prime minister von Kahr to declare Bavaria's secession from the German Republic.

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WIRELESS: MARVEL AND MENACE

ONE is free to wonder how many of the millions that listen to the B.B.C. every day of their lives take advantage of the Minute for Reflection to thank the scientists who have endowed them with the greatest of all modern inventions for world-happiness? And one is free to answer: Not one in a million. They accept this superlative achievement of human skill just as indifferently as the packet of cigarettes for which they had to queue up—nay the trouble of getting the latter gives it for the moment a superior value to the priceless gift of radio. That nation shall speak peace unto nation through etheric space does not thrill them greatly. No wonder, when we consider that through so many of the years in which radio has been at the command of men it is War that has been spoken. Without wireless this world war could not have come to pass: certainly not in its manner of coming and continuing. Without (1) the misuse of this marvel of science in spreading lies, hatred, and threats of horror and nation speaking war unto nation, (2) the co-ordinating of the movements of armies and navies and ships at sea, and (3) guiding the death-dealing bombers to their targets—without these no such universal war as we are witnessing could have developed on this planet.

Few, indeed, ever think of that when listening to exponents of the lowest form of melody, known as "crooning", which my dictionary rightly defines as "a hollow, continued moan". Moaners would be a better description for its exponents. Nor can you be impressed with the wonder of wireless when your receiver sometimes assaults your ears and senses with the crude and crapulous jokes of men indiscriminately dubbed "comedians", some of whose prototypes before Marconi's day collected their quite adequate fees in their hats by the sad sea waves.

Yet, think of the wonder of wireless when on December 26, 1941, you could listen while all the world listened to the greatest oration since Lincoln's two-minutes' masterpiece at Gettysburg in November 1863, which was heard by a few hundreds only. Churchill's thirty-five minutes of superbly-balanced oratory, in which he had the greatest theme in modern history for exposition—the uniting of all freedom-loving nations, under the lead of the entire English-speaking world, for the extinction of tyranny, wars, murder, and slavery—this great speech will echo down the ages and myriads of

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the globe's inhabitants were able to listen to the actual words of flame and fervour as they issued from his own eloquent lips. A tremendous occasion, which thrilled into a renewed fervour of life the countless millions of listeners who shared the orator's sympathies and ideals, while it must also have confirmed their faith in their deliverance for the oppressed and tortured who could hear it in those lands where the Nazi slavery has been imposed.

Just what followed the British broadcast of this historic speech I cannot say. I certainly did not listen. But as likely as not it might have been : " We are now taking you over to Cock-eyed Caravan in Soho for dance music by Billy Bonehead and His Boys, with Minnie Moaner." That's the pity of it—what a juxtaposition ! But, of course, the B.B.C. cannot be expected to cater mainly, or even largely, for high-brows, when one remembers the intellectual standard of its major body of listeners—after seventy years of free education. Nor am I in any way against amusement and entertainment, with or without music, featuring largely on the programmes. I am indebted to B.B.C. entertainers for too many good laughs—no listener can be more eager than I at any time for a good comic turn—to grudge the quantity that is daily dished up. It's the contemptible quality of so much of it to which I take exception.

So important is the part that radio is playing in the life of all nations today I feel we must do more than tolerate it or take it for granted. Its place in our everyday life is increasingly important, and after the War it may revolutionize more than one of our cherished institutions. It can only benefit by criticism. Just now it has attained to titanic stature because of the paper famine. The B.B.C. is clearly usurping many of the time-honoured functions of journalism. With the exceptions of the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* among the London dailies I remember that I found the others astonishingly empty on the morning after that Boxing Day when they had actually three days' news to offer their readers. Except for a few brilliant columns of exclusive writing, they mainly consisted of the news bulletins, to which we had listened several times over, reprinted and slightly garnished with " splash " headlines.

I fear that our daily papers (except those named) are in grave danger of losing individuality by over-compression in order to print a maximum of copies from their available quotas. It magnifies the office of the B.B.C., and no greater disaster to our social and intellectual life could happen than the B.B.C. emerging from the War as the prime source of national information, instruction, and amusement. That would be a big step towards totalitarianism. The

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B.B.C. as a stronghold of Bureaucracy would be a menace to the very freedom for which we are fighting and enduring unimagined privations. It must not be; yet things could easily drift that way—are drifting in my opinion, and only strong, free, individual newspapers will stop the drift.

My thoughts have turned thus after reading an attractive pamphlet *B.B.C. at War*, by Antonia White, in which the multifarious activities of the Corporation are described and illustrated in a way that makes one feel " hats off to the B.B.C.". But there's the very focal point of danger. My first impulse was to pen a glowing tribute to the War work of this great national monopolist organization; it is impossible to withhold admiration for the scope, enterprise, and general good sense of its ever-widening activities, only the least worthy of which are best known to a public incurious about the best. Its continuous foreign broadcasts in its European News Service are models of honest statement and judicious comment, as I can personally vouch from being able to follow them in three of the many foreign languages in which they are issued. Especially do I like to listen to the fine, vigorous phrasing of the Spanish announcer, though the Italian and French are equally praiseworthy and the English bulletins in the European service sometimes seem to me more pithy and pointed than those in the Home Service.

The vividness of the news is immensely enhanced by the recordings from B.B.C. observers on all fronts of the War, and the men and women that are often brought to the microphone to relate personal experiences help not only to give immediacy to the news but to enlarge its appeal and its international value. All this is splendid, and I'm backing much of our propaganda of understatement against all the hysterical, over-emphasized, and exaggerated emanations from enemy sources. But I repeat that it will be a bad day for Britain if the present news monopoly of the B.B.C. should ever become an established and regularized competitor with the free press of a free people.

Not content with having made a success of the Brains Trust, I see that the B.B.C. is even giving *Any Questions?* a book all to itself . . . and private publishers are starving for paper! The publications department of the B.B.C. has always seemed to me a questionable form of activity in a country where we have not yet copied our Russian Allies by nationalizing the book-publishing trade as well as the Press. I am sure that is as foreign to British ideas as the Russian alphabet to our school children. I have listened two or three times with pleasure, amusement, and some surprise to the

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Brains Trust—surprise at certain questions which stumped them, and pleasure at the readiness and excellent extempore phrasing with which men of great scholarship and nimble wit enlarged and illuminated answers to questions that are fully answered in any up-to-date and many out-of-date encyclopedias! No doubt, however, this B.B.C. feature in its more human handling of facts old and new which educational writers and editors have long circulated by the million, is like the wise-cracking of Kenway and Young, who had a good run of fun one year on the Radio, in that "it makes you think".

* * * * *

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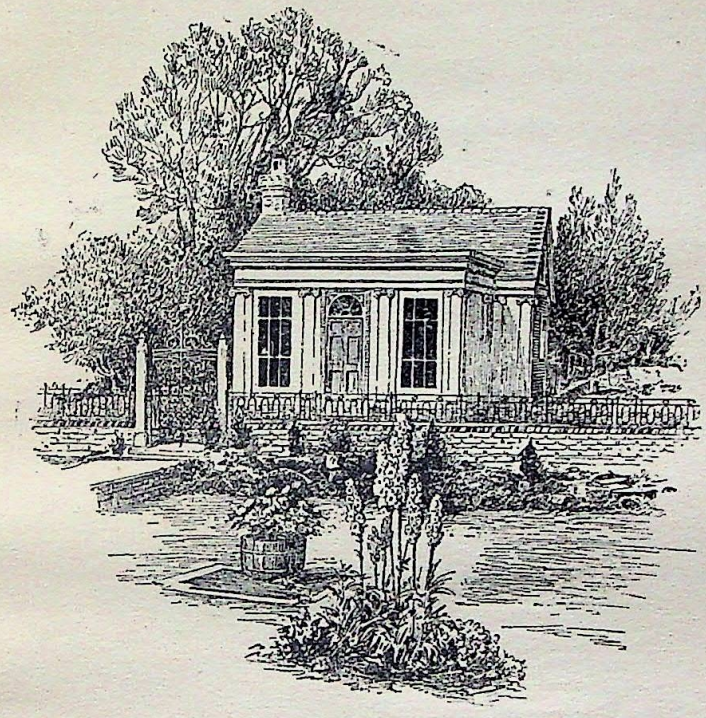
IN MY GARDEN LIBRARY



Drawn by Felix Garden.

LITTLE TALKS

ON

BOOKS, PERSONALITIES, EXPERIENCES.

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O HAPPY BOOKMAN!

A Library in a garden! The phrase seems to contain the whole felicity of Man.—*Edmund Gosse.*

A world of books amid a world of green,
Sweet song without, sweet song again within,
Flowers in the garden, in the folios too:
O happy Bookman, let me live with you.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE, *English Poems*, 1892

BUT for the War I might never have known those delights of which the poet sings. Oceans divide us and the waste of seas, but were it otherwise how glad would this happy bookman be to have the poet's company here!

On a day of summer within its book-lined walls one may conform to the doctor's orders to live as much as possible in the open air, since with windows opened to the north, east and south, and the fine old Georgian door in the west ajar, one has nearly attained *al fresco* conditions. Through the doorway, and framed by the swaying branches of the pollard elms that fringe my garden, there is a far view due west to Firle Beacon, where once in the days of the Armada the cresset burned when there was "fire over England", and fire in the hearts of Englishmen as there is again today. The sunsets that I have looked upon through this same open door seem to me almost as opulent in colour as any I have seen in distant parts of the world, though nowhere can I hope ever to witness such exciting artistry of nature as I used to watch every afternoon from the hill of Sta. Lucia in Santiago, during my Chilian sojourn. A lovely sunset will ever repay the contemplative observer, but need hardly justify such haste as that of the old lady I read about yesterday, who in hurrying out of doors to get an ampler view fell and broke an ankle with fatal result!

The northern prospect of my library is crowded with apple trees, the east has open country, with a towering group of noble elms as a boundary mark at the north corner of my meadow, shadowed by the rolling mass of Windover Hill on which my western casement looks across many rows of old apple trees. The orchard and garden are the haunt of birds innumerable whose "sweetness without" is too often drowned in these days by the hoarse roar of warplanes on their way to talk to the Hun in language he understands: language he invented but failed to bring it to such perfection of expression as our R.A.F. bombers have attained.

The other evening, however, being a peaceful one—and the peace that enfolds my Downland home despite all war traffic of the

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skies is almost uncanny when one contemplates the destruction in nearby coast towns—the other evening as I was still at my desk in the last glow of the sunset I was astonished by the loudness of a finch's chirruping. So persistent was it that, turning round to ascertain if it was " a wee bird cam' to oor ha' door ", I discovered it was a genuine case of " sweet song within ", for there by my bureau at the tall western windows was a venturesome young goldfinch perched unsteadily on one of the curving arms of the carved oak desk-chair ! His little claws could get no grip on the polished wood, and having attracted my attention with his chirruping he proceeded to entertain me by flying from arm to arm across the chair (a wide one) but could find no firm footing on either. He then began exploring the strange territory into which he had penetrated, perching in turn on all the high spots of the library. As there was no " bust of Pallas just above my chamber door " he made shift by alighting on a very modern porcelain head from Vienna and resumed his excited chirrup, chirrup ! Enough for the occasion I felt, as this sort of intrusion is not conducive to composition; but he preferred fluttering around the book-crowded walls to being chased out of the open door by which he had flown in, so calling in helpers from the house we had a lively five minutes before we could corner the intruder and return him to his own leafy realm. That is but one of the many little incidents peculiar to a Library in a Garden which may not have been present in the poet's fancy. And I might add that a dear fat old toad has a fancy after nightfall for sitting on the wire mat at the door so that I must step warily, torch in hand, in closing down for the night.

Neither the quiet life within nor the wild life without was the theme in my mind when I began this note ; only the building itself. Those poets with their airy fancies do draw one away from earthy facts, even when these may be of intrinsic interest. And the facts are these : having for a variety of reasons, all war-made, to evacuate temporarily a cherished home by the sea whence I had never wished to move until the final stillness had settled on me, and determined to carry on my work as editor and writer through the Second Great War as I had done through the First—and the Boer War before that—I found it desirable to transfer some of my belongings and all my domesticities to a country cottage which before the War I had made out of an old village school with no expectation of myself becoming its occupier. This achieved, it was soon apparent that a long and possibly permanent residence was to be considered, and the problem of my books became acute, for some five thousand volumes, all essential as tools of one's trade, are not easily accommodated : hence the Garden Library. Truth to tell, I had never in my life wished for a library in a garden. Necessity mothered its invention.

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How should it be built? Of what materials? Fine old weathered bricks and antique tiles would have been my choice and my architect made alluring designs employing these with harmonious timbering. But haste was necessary: restrictions were the order of the day and five hundred pounds the limit. So timber was the chosen medium since that brought the structure by a convenient bye-law into the category of an "outhouse", and ensured approval of the local authority. But why not make it beautiful to look upon? Artistic taste in the use of material, however common the material may be, does not increase expense.

After much searching I discovered in the neighbourhood of Twickenham a charming relic of Georgian architecture in the form of a pavilion which had been the front part of an orangery alleged to have stood at one time somewhere on the grounds of Pope's Villa. This married to a modern extension would clearly provide the necessary working accommodation and would certainly be lovely to look upon. What better could one do than clear a space in the orchard and surround the building with its own little garden? Ah, but Mr. B. Bureaucrat had decreed that I wasn't to spend more than £500 on the job, and before I got well going with it after acquiring that lovely bit of Georgian timber work with its eighteen pilasters and their charmingly carved capitals, Mr. B. B. decreed afresh that £100 was all that might be spent on extending any existing property! I was entirely in sympathy with the spirit of these restrictions though strongly resentful of the letter: there seemed no reason in sanity why the essential work should not go on provided it could be done without (*a*) using any material of value to the War effort and (*b*) without employing for one hour any workman who was in demand for War work. These conditions were scrupulously observed. In fact the builder thought that I had done a public service in enabling him as a contractor clamorous for War work to keep about ten or a dozen members of his staff in employment for a few weeks when they would else have been on the dole. And so the Library came into being, a thing of outward beauty and inward utility.

After I had been for months rejoicing in the use of my literary "outhouse" in the orchard, quite as keenly, I imagine, as a village carpenter in his new and ampler workshop, for my editorial labours have long been pursued on a fifty-fifty basis as between London and my country home, it was doubtless on the information of some unknown informer that I was asked—no, that is too civil a word, "requested", or in bureaucratic jargon some official had been "requested to ask", etc.—what the job had cost me and whether I had acquired Mr. B. Bureaucrat's permission. If not, why not, and so on. The answer was that in the exceptional circumstances I hadn't, but I had a mind conscious of rectitude in every detail and

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all available records of costs were at Mr. B. B.'s disposal. It took him and his numerous well-paid assistants some months to determine that I ought to bear the consequences of my war-made crime. So what? Thanks to the good sense of the local magistrates I was mulct in a nominal fine; and I have since had an increased admiration for local magistracy, as I feel that in our after-War fight with bureaucracy their common sense will be John Citizen's best protection when he is struggling to rid himself from those petty Nazified tyrannies that have inevitably sprung up in subduing the larger tyranny of complete Nazism. This I had made a frequent thesis in my editorial writings during the first three years of the War and if I have tired of it for the time being that may be ascribed to a disinclination to be over-critical of a system which in wartime has many merits, never forgetting that when the shadow of war is lifted these merits will inevitably become defects.

One example only shall I give: Mr. B. B. did not complain that I had used any material of value to the War effort, only that workmen who *might* have been employed on War work helped on the job. My answer to that has been given above, but I am assured it is unsatisfactory because, forsooth, "*all workers* in the building trades are *theoretically* supposed to be reserved". Thus Mr. B. B. would rather see them drawing the dole and loafing in idleness than employed usefully, and profitably to themselves and the State, while ready at a moment's notice to respond to an urgent call for "first aid repairs" or other official employment!

Enough of this, however, or I shall have travelled too far from the poet's picture of a library in a garden. I have been persuaded to this personal statement only because the matter in question had nation-wide publicity such as no piece of worthy literary or artistic work could ever hope for. And I might add that each month I work in my Garden Library that caused all that pother I earn for the War effort by way of income tax and surtax a monthly contribution that equals the total cost of the building and in a twelvemonth pays the annual salary of the Minister of Buildings, and perhaps more than one of his assistant secretaries, who employed a barrister to tell the court that this Happy Bookman had positively built the Library "for his own comfort"!

What does it matter anyhow? For those great birds in freedom's fight, the heavy bombers on their way to Hunland, are flying over here tonight so high that at my desk in the Library their throbbing sounds like the roll of surf on a distant shore; the night is dark and starry, the Downland air is fresh and mild—and best of all "the nightingales are singing near"!

O Happy Bookman!

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Cunninghame Graham: "My Hero"

BEFORE I gave up listening-in to anything but the nine o'clock news I had great enjoyment one night from a broadcast of "Don Roberto in the South". Cunninghame Graham was one of the heroes of my youth: the most romantic figure of his age. It was good to hear his own picturesque youth brought back from limbo by the art of the broadcaster; for this production struck me as reaching very near perfection in a new and increasingly competent technique. The ingenuity with which the writings of Don Roberto were used to evoke the man himself, the happy idea of an old Scots retainer at Gartmore recalling the colourful personality of the splendid man who is now at rest in the island grave on the Lake of Menteith (the only "lake" in all Scotland, all others are "lochs", and a favourite haunt of my youth, for I was of the same district as my hero), the brief echoes of Gaucho life and music, and the uncanny likeness of Cecil Trouncer's voice to that of the man he was impersonating in the very words that man had written—all this went to build up a sound picture that caught the imagination and will stay in the memory. My congratulations to all concerned and that gratitude which is a lively sense of favours to come.

As I listened I felt that few men in my time have had so splendid a life as Graham of Gartmore. Rich enough never to have known the need to earn a living, able to indulge himself in all reasonable luxuries, to pursue his fancies where he wished, endowed with a superb personality and an intellect that added to his manly attractiveness: a veritable favourite of the gods. An aristocrat whose keenest sympathies were ever with the "common" people. Withal a rebel. My early admiration derived less from his adventurous life in the Argentine (of which in later years I was to have some experience myself) than from his espousing the cause of the downtrodden everywhere.

His labour speeches in Trafalgar Square, his fearless support of the Spanish workers, haranguing the masses in Madrid and elsewhere in their native tongue of which he was a master—these I remember fired me with the romance of the man. And my first peep at Parliament was due to him, who broke a rule of the House by giving "the laddie up frae Glesca" a ticket for the Strangers' Gallery when his own member had failed to oblige. Thanks to the kindly offices of Mrs. Doris Thorne, the elder daughter of Henry Arthur Jones, who was one of his intimate friends, I had the joy of an afternoon with Don Roberto some six or seven years ago, when he was an enviably lusty octogenarian, and I was able, I hope, to convey a little of the enthusiasm I had felt for him through more than forty years of hero-worship.

Cunninghame Graham told me a subtly amusing story on that

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occasion—more than one, but he seemed to enjoy telling this one most. In a certain West End bridge club an old Poona Colonel came in one day as a lady of his acquaintance flung out of the card room in a high state of dudgeon, and immediately appealed for his advice. "A dreadful thing, an unbelievable thing, has happened. Mrs. So-and-so was my partner; she was dummy, and because I was one light she said I made a mistake in trumping from dummy, and scolded me afterwards in a most offensive manner. And as I wouldn't argue with her, she actually called me a pig-headed old bitch! Do tell me what am I to do about it?" "My dear lady," was the reply, "it's twenty-five years since I left the Army and they still call me Colonel."

The Lure of "End Papers"

Two kinds of reading matter have an irresistible fascination for me: publishers' advance lists and the "end papers" in books. They attract me for reasons that are different. The spring or autumn catalogues, especially when they contain brief and shamelessly biased descriptions of the books they herald, afford me the delights of anticipation, so often greater than any pleasure the realization brings. End papers are those selected lists of their wares which all publishers used to bind inside the back covers of their books. Today too few of them, for my taste, observe this custom. I prefer a book with end papers, having often derived more enjoyment from the contemplation of these than from the book itself. Yet they are at times melancholy reading: at best they exhale a sweet sadness, as one notes the old familiar names of writers whose fame has long since vanished with their own disappearance from this scene, or, sadder still, had been extinguished while they still survived.

I have never looked at an end paper without finding myself instantly under the spell of the past. By way of experiment I reach my hand to the nearest shelf and pick a book at random. It is the 1880 edition of *The Slang Dictionary* with the imprint of Chatto & Windus. This work, I believe, was compiled by John Camden Hotten, a young publisher who was himself a man of letters. As he died in 1873, I suspect *The Slang Dictionary* was either his last book or appeared after his death, for the preface is dated December 20, 1873. Hotten introduced Artemus Ward and other American humorists of the 'sixties to English readers. I re-read a few pages by the amusing Artemus the other day as an antidote to the conceited banalities of one of America's latest funny men which had been thrust upon me by a morning newspaper. "Me for Artemus!" was my verdict. Hotten published in 1867 *Mr. Sprouts*, a humorous study of Cockney life by Richard Whiteing, who had to wait

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thirty years more to make a literary hit with his *No. 5 John Street*. Whiteing told me that Hotten died from trichinosis, that rare and horrible disease produced by infected pork. One of Hotten's authors who had a grievance—most authors have—against his publisher, composed a heartless epitaph: "Hotten, rotten, forgotten." But here I am, more than sixty years later, to prove that it was only a half-truth. Quite a number of the books that Hotten published or compiled are selling to this day, his copyrights having been taken over by Chatto & Windus whose end papers of 1880 have sent my thoughts at this tangent.

The first thing in this end paper is an advertisement of that masterpiece of compilation, *The Reader's Handbook*, by Dr. Cobham Brewer, a queer little short-sighted man with a long and tangled beard who died in 1897 after compiling a number of books whose circulations in his own life-time greatly exceeded those of many a best seller of today. And what, think ye, did he get out of them in the way of money? Less than a Holborn dustman earns. This I have just learned from a hitherto unpublished letter of his, written in July 1886, quoted in *The Literary Guide*. Even our young writers who sniff at five guineas for a thousand words should have a sigh to spare for poor old Brewer who confessed that he received £50 for a book that had then sold 380,000 copies, and has probably doubled that figure since! Another of his books had sold 450,000, and yet another had gone through eighteen large editions in eighteen years. Three million copies of his works were then in circulation, and withal his annual income had never exceeded £200. "I drink no wine, beer, or spirits, never smoke, never take a day's outing," he concludes. "These are too expensive for me." Perhaps it was his frugal fare that enabled him to live to be eighty-seven. Although Robertson Nicoll used to say that one whose life has been spent among books is not to be pitied, I cannot but feel that old Brewer ought to have had a heavy grudge against his publishers. Whenever I have to refer to his *Phrase & Fable*, or his *Reader's Handbook*, I shall have a kindly thought for this the worst paid of all best sellers, whose patient labours have profited scores of thousands of students for more than two generations.

What's a Snob?

WHAT'S a snob? I asked several knowledgeable persons this question after reading the judgement on the Sitwell case, which created a bit of a stir in journalistic circles two or three years back. Most of their answers tended to confirm my own opinion. The judge rather stressed the fact that the counsel for the defence had described Miss Edith Sitwell as a snob, and a lawyer friend told me that the term is slanderous. This was news to me. And I am certain it would

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be to many others. But having looked up half a dozen dictionaries—which all seem to be copied from each other—I can see why the legal mind, with nothing but six dictionaries to go by, would take this view. " A person of no breeding or social position." " A person who pretends from vulgar ostentation to be better than he is; one who puts an exaggerated and vulgar estimate on rank, wealth, fashionable society or distinction, and endeavours to conceal his own supposed inferior position or connections." " Also applied to persons who adopt a similar attitude in intellectual or artistic spheres." These are definitions taken from the most modern of English dictionaries, and as I was associated in its production with Professor Wyld, its distinguished editor, for no less than eleven years, it would ill become me to cast doubt upon its dicta. . . . And yet, well, I have a doubt!

Only once have I ever been called a snob. The circumstances were so completely free from any thought of snobbery that I have not forgotten the occasion, though it was thirty years ago. My partner and I had driven off at the first tee on a North London golf course when an aggressive Methodist, who ran a local tin tabernacle and fancied himself a hot golfer as well as a hot gospeller, came hurrying up with another player, shouting to us as we left the tee that they were " coming through " as they were playing for the medal. Had this happened before we had played we should have given way, as we were not medal-hunting that day, but we had already gone some distance towards our next stroke and resented the fellow's impudence. When, a hole or two later, I had an opportunity to expostulate with him he could only shout: " You are the greatest snob I ever met on a golf course! " And my laughter arose from the inappropriate epithet. He was entirely in the wrong, as the club committee decided, on my reporting the matter, that the bumptious one had to apologize for his conduct. But " snob "! None of the definitions I have quoted remotely suited the case, for although I did regard the preaching fellow as " a person of no breeding ", I would not have called him a snob on that ground alone and the verdict of the committee cleared me from any suspicion of snobbery—whatever that may be.

Yes, despite the unanimous verdict of these half-dozen dictionaries, I am still in doubt. My opinion is that " snob " is one of the many words that have changed or are changing their meaning in my own time. Directed at any of the Sitwells strictly on the dictionary implications it is merely ridiculous, and any layman can appreciate its slanderous nature. But my opinion is that not many—perhaps not even the lady to whom it was so ineptly applied—would greatly resent the suggestion of intellectual snobbery. That implies an attitude of mind that finds satisfaction in contemplating life in terms of refinement rather than grossness; perhaps even a certain

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disdain for the commoner things. But I am sure one could say, "Old Johnson's a good fellow, though a bit of a snob", without implying offence. Indeed, most of us who have not cultivated the beery familiarity of the pub, and exercise some discretion in making acquaintance, might be charged with snobbery (only in the first degree, perhaps) without wilting under the charge. "George Nathaniel Curzon, that very superior person"—who was actually a man of great geniality as well as immense ability—was frequently described in the press as a snob and probably accepted the epithet on the principle that the greater includes the less. If I were to boast that I had slept in his bathroom (as indeed I did for some weeks after the war began, at the Savage Club, formerly his stately home in Carlton House Terrace) that might be stigmatized as snobbish, so I suppress the impulse.

A reference to that amazing work, Roget's *Thesaurus*, has not helped me. For there I find snob lined up with flunkey, lap-dog, lick-spittle, carpet knight, which gets me no forarder. I greatly doubt if anybody today uses snob as equivalent to lick-spittle. Whatever Miss Edith Sitwell may be in the select company of the poets she is assuredly the very antithesis of lick-spittle, all which shows you the danger of having to make a juridical decision on a dictionary definition. So far as I am concerned, anybody is welcome to call me a snob without fear of an action for slander, and I am confirmed in this by (1) a sense of humour; (2) an indifference to what *personae non gratae* think of me and (3) a glance through Thackeray's *Book of Snobs*. It might have been better if the judge in the Sitwell case had read through those 250 pages of Thackeray rather than a dozen dictionary definitions of Snob, for they confirm me in the impression that at my first reading half-a-century ago they did not leave me with so low an idea of a snob as these dictionary makers insist upon. In a police court the other day a woman called a man a snob and on the magistrate asking her why she did so, she replied: "because he carries his umbrella wrapped up even when it's raining."

Watts-Dunton and James Douglas

HARDLY a day passes that I am not reminded by some little incident of the headlong flight of time. Looking over my notebook in which I jot down subjects of topical interest that I might write about, I found one the other day which read "Douglas & Watts Dunton". This had been jotted down at the time of James Douglas's death, which I thought took place about a year ago. It actually happened in September of 1940! Perhaps this is the common experience of those only who are passing into the sere and yellow. And, by the way, I've never seen Nature in her sere and yellow looking so

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enchanting as she is this autumn : the verdure of the lawns about my Library is lost in a smother of birch, beech and elm leaves that give back an illusion of richest gold in the white sunshine of November, for this has been a windless day of sunshine, spring-like in atmosphere, yet " solemn and serene " as Shelley says, with a harmony

> . . . and a lustre in its sky,
> Which through the summer is not heard or seen,
> As if it could not be, as if it had not been !

The colour harmony of sunset, made from vivid pinks and blues, if faithfully caught by such master artist as art has never known would surely tempt the critics to a denial that it had been seen. And as our own years slide into their autumn they too bring a new harmony of being which even the discordant news of battle far or near cannot entirely destroy. . . .

But there we go again ; sentiment breaking in ! The note I meant to write, according to that note-book page, was about two personalities of my time, and meanwhile more than scores of notable men and women whose lives have somewhere, briefly or long, intertwined with mine have become the subjects of the necrologist since James Douglas died. This brilliant journalist was an Ulster Scot with little of the Scottish equanimity in his mental make-up and too much Irish emotionalism to give more than ephemeral interest to anything he ever wrote, which, however, was always good journalism. His only considerable book was *Theodore Watts-Dunton : Poet, Novelist & Critic.* And the reason for its considerableness has never been told. It is one of the stoutest volumes on my bookshelves and the ingenious craft of the publisher has contrived with large type, thick paper and strong canvas-covered boards to make its 500 pages outbulk any one of the many hundreds of biographies amongst which it stands. It was published in 1904, just one year before I became acquainted with Watts-Dunton and had the occasional thrill of dining with him and Swinburne at the Pines. Greatly as I admired the famous litterateur then, and much as I still cherish his memory, I could not be blind to certain little foibles, but when I spoke to Robertson Nicoll about the inordinate size of the book which Douglas had written he revealed a flight of vanity on the part of Watts-Dunton beyond my suspecting.

" Don't blame Douglas," said Nicoll. " Poor man, he had a verra trying job wi' that book. Man, it's about twice the length that Douglas wrote. But Watts-Dunton had to pass a' the proofs—a job that took many many months—and when the galleys dribbled back to the author he was shocked to find the extent to which his original text had been expanded and intercalated wi' great chunks from Watts-Dunton's own published writings, no' to say anything

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about the highly laudatory remarks wi' which these were introduced. As you know, he tinkered about with *Aylwin* for nearly twenty years before he would let it be published, and it looked as if he might have gone on for years tinkering with Douglas's book had he no' been over seventy. Don't blame Douglas for its terrible length : he was raither ashamed o't, but had to humour Theodore. An' I can tell ye it cost a bonnie penny to produce the thing."

As Nicoll was the literary adviser to the publishers of the book and knew every detail of its production, I do not suspect any exaggeration in this story, which came back to mind at the time of Douglas's death and is only now being recorded. Watts-Dunton was a great critic, a fine poet, and had he been less fastidious, his *Aylwin* proves he could have been a good novelist. His vanity about his biography was, no doubt, a foible of his late years when, himself full of splendid literary achievement, but long overshadowed in the public eye by the last of the great Victorian galaxy of poets to whom he was companion and faithful friend, he felt that he would like to see some recognition of his own life's work and contrived to make Douglas's biographical effort truly monumental.

Solace of Books in 'Flu time

ALWAYS provided that an illness does not rule out the solace of book-reading, there are times when a busy journalist like myself can almost welcome " a touch of 'flu ", as not long ago when one of my rare spells of sickness was turned to good use by my getting away with a hefty chunk of reading—" fine confused reading "—as the old farmer said after he had ploughed through the dictionary. I had to stay at my country cottage for a fortnight : half the time with a temperature. As luck would have it, on several of these days I was held indoors while outside the weather was absurdly spring-like ; only when I was fit for footing it in the meadow did it turn cold and dirty again. It is the height of luxury to be kept abed with nothing more distressing than a touch of 'flu when skies are lowering and the rain is driving athwart your window. But what more irritating than to have the sun streaming into your room and blue skies and balmy breezes urging you out of doors when the doctor has said, " at least two more days before you venture down-stairs " ? Either way, reading offers the surest consolation. The banalities and the increasing boisterousness of the wireless (apart from the news bulletin) proved too much for me in these days of enforced idleness. Each effort to listen-in as a relief from reading sent me quickly back to my book to relieve the relief. And I can now look back with some satisfaction on my tale of reading.

Incidentally, I owe it all to snowdrops. For, without cap or coat, I went out one day to see how the snowdrops, for which my village

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is famed, were showing up. I was just too early for them, but just in perfect time to catch a snorting nor'-easter that blew up unexpectedly and presented me with a nosegay of rheum. Today, however, I have had the joy of seeing the steep banks white with snowdrops, the yellow aconites ablaze in the vicar's garden—centuries old—where the hedges are already beginning to break into tenderest greens which promise " light again, leaf again, life again, love again " (not one of Tennyson's best lines, by the way), when " all the winters are hidden".

The local landscape had been hidden for three days with vast clutterings of tanks and myriads of machines and men that issued from highways and byways by the modern wizardry of war, and, though ugly as sin, are welcome as flowers of spring in the promise they bring for those of us who are dwellers in " Invasion areas ". They have churned up our rural lanes and scarred our commons with ruts that a whole century of country carts could not have produced.

In the very act of admiring the snowdrops one was in imminent danger of a muddy death from these wheeled terrors, but we crushed into the banks and didn't grumble at the mud they splashed upon us, for were not they telling us as they rattled by that England was ready for the invader? That what the mechanized Hun had achieved in Poland, in the Low Countries and in France, would not be so easy of achievement here? A light tank turned round in front of my garden gate as neatly and as swiftly as a waltzer could have reversed.

Odd that one's affections can be so nicely divided as mine have been between snowdrops and tanks! But comforting to reflect that when the last tank goes to the scrap heap there will still be snowdrops ready to recall the world to loveliness in many a February for centuries yet to be.

One of the nine or ten books—a strangely " assorted lot "—which I have been reading through, or dipping into, was published thirty years ago, *A Hind Let Loose*, by C. E. Montague. I find that Montague has been dead for thirteen years. Like the only novel I ever wrote (and that dates back, alas, almost forty years), it is a romance of journalism. Well, after waiting all these years, it took up little of my time as I just could not continue beyond the third chapter. Montague's style, I discovered, has the power instantly to transform me into a Capulet.

I remember Conan Doyle in an after-dinner symposium, to which I contributed, working himself into a great heat over R. L. Stevenson's " self-conscious English ". " He stopped the clock with an interjected finger " was a particular phrase of Doyle's abomination. I stood for Stevenson, as it seemed to me that " he stopped the clock with his finger " did not express all that was in the mind of the narrator.

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But Conan Doyle, who wrote virile, forthright, unfrilled English, would surely have felt faintly sick (as I did) if he had read: "A valedictory hand enjoined Dick's shoulder." That's a line from Montague. It means that in taking leave of his nephew Dick, after a little homily on how to be a journalist, a quite unbelievable editor-proprietor named Brumby patted him on the back and told him to "model yourself on him, my boy" (the "him" referring to a member of his editorial staff). When I began to read Chapter IV with this: "In the creative mind, as well as in other places, the wind bloweth where it listeth. In Dick's it was now to blow great guns, but not ones that held. Heady gusts of clicking would drop down into lulls of some length, painfully traversed by straggling single files of ticks; and these light airs would die right away to dead calms, or again be whipped up into fresh squalls that had a keep-it-up-or-else-we're-done-for clatter about them, as if a horse were trying to rush a hill too steep for the weight in the cart. The spirit bloweth and is still." . . . Well, to be frank, I took my temperature, and, finding it still at 101 . 4 I placed a valedictory hand on the volume and wrote against the passage quoted "a screw let loose?"

Not that I am ill to please in my reading—even such preciosity would not daunt me if the author had caught my interest. But, as style is the man, that sort of writing affects me much as a posturing person from Bloomsbury would in telling me about the reactions of his soul to the rude world in which he finds himself. On all matters of pedantry and priggishness in writing I can recommend the unique work *Modern English Usage*, in which I have read for an hour or two each day that I have been resting. To me it is an ideal "bed book" in all save bulk. A thin-paper edition of H. W. Fowler's masterpiece would be a real joy for the wakeful hours. It is salty with Attic wit, and its wisdom on every doubtful point in the use of English is unassailable.

John Milton Let Loose

I HAVE had excellent entertainment, too, from a very different source, E. S. P. Haynes's *Pages from a Lawyer's Notebooks*—a little book crammed with wise, and sometimes witty, reflections and reminiscences covering much the same stretch of years as I have lived through. Arnold Bennett met Haynes in Piccadilly one night and, after chatting for a while, Haynes asked him if he would care to dine with him one evening. "No, I don't think I should," said Bennett. Haynes, you see, is engagingly frank, and though he goes through life trailing clouds of glory from Eton and Balliol his little book is full of good sense and humanism and has accounted for two or three of my most pleasant hours. His one futile effort at an

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aphorism is the opening paragraph: "Reminiscences. If only youth could invent and old age remember. Youth remembers, but is mute. Old age cannot remember but invents!" This strikes me as badly observed and is entirely opposed to my own experience of youth and age. What has youth to remember, what need age to invent?

But I am glad that he has preserved from that once popular columnist, Spencer Leigh Hughes ("Sub Rosa"), this delightful collection of phrases which Hughes had extracted from a pamphlet by John Milton attacking a lawyer, who had ventured to differ from the poet in his views on divorce: "A beast, a cock-brained solicitor, a low pudderer, a mere and arrant pettifogger, a pork who never read any philosophy, an unbuttoned fellow, a boar in a vineyard, a snout in pickle . . . the shame of all honest attorneys, an unswilled hogshead, a tradesman of the law whose best ware is only gibberish, a serving man and solicitor compounded into one mongrel . . . an apostate scarecrow, a vagabond and ignoramus, a beetle, a daw, a horsefly, a nuisance, and a brazen ass." From which it will be seen that the author of *Paradise Lost*, Puritan though he was, could never have been at a loss for the right word of abuse even in an age that was not mealy-mouthed . . . and no silly laws of libel to restrain one!

Some notes on two or three more of that very odd assortment of books which I was reading during that bout of 'flu: *The New Immortality*, by J. W. Dunne; *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, by Ernest Hemingway (a remarkable new novel of about a quarter of a million words, every one of which, including much Spanish obscenity, I have read!) and, as always, Lecky's *The Map of Life*. In the last-named I was especially struck with some passages of what Lecky calls "the changed estimate of suffering"—much in point today. I am taking no risks in stirring up correspondence by saying anything on the religious aspect of the question, but in my opinion the greatest benefactors of their fellow-men are those scientists whose discoveries have made the burden of human suffering easier to bear. What Lecky describes as "a beautiful passage" from a funeral sermon by Newman on a priest who had been an indomitable sufferer illustrates an attitude of mind rarer today than it was seventy or eighty years ago: "When a friend visited him in the last week, he found he had scrupled at allowing his temples to be moistened with some refreshing waters, and had with difficulty been brought to give his consent; he said he feared it was too great a luxury. When the same friend offered him some liquid to allay his distressing thirst his answer was the same." I am content to leave the quotation to the judgement of the reader, but I am rather glad that the Right Rev. Henry Weedall, to whom it applies, was no common clay. Rather would I say with the Bounder of jocund memory, "Pass me the febrifuge!"

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Hemingway and Spanish Obscenity

I HAVE found life so much more interesting and exciting than any fiction that I rarely spend any of my diminishing hours with novels. But a friend sent me a copy, just arrived from America, of Hemingway's latest *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and I fell for it completely. It is a great story, superbly told, and its action (covering a stretch of three and a half days) takes place in scenes long since familiar to me: Madrid and the Guadarrama. My last visit to Madrid was a few months before the outbreak of the Civil War and I shall not forget the velvet nights of stars on the roof restaurant of Gaylord's. I have often wondered what has happened there during the War—just as I wonder now what's happening at my most romantic of restaurants, the Chateau de Madrid on the craggy Corniche—and it came with a thrill of personal contact to find that several chapters of Hemingway's romance introduce Gaylord's. Perhaps it colours my delight in the book.

Once I arrived after nine at night, travel-stained and weary, at an hotel in Saverne—the town in Alsace noted for the infamous "Saverne incident", when some drunken German officers used their sabres on the unoffending townsfolk—and the waiter asked me to wait "hauf a jiffy" while he attended a bunch of German officers in the next room. Then he gave me all his attention and a marvellous reproduction of the Glasgow accent. He had been ten years at the North British Hotel of my own home town! Similarly, the waiter at Gaylord's had been known to me for years at the Savoy. These little incidents of travel are not readily forgotten.

But such adventitious interest has nothing to do with the most fascinating love story I have read in years: the tragic tale of Robert Jordan and Maria, which is the kernel of Hemingway's great novel. My praise of the book is the more genuine because there is much in it that revolts me. I know Spanish quite as well as Hemingway, and I could have wished that I didn't, for his pages are littered with Spanish phrases and nearly all of them are the foulest of obscenities. *Me cago en la leche de su madre puta* is one of his favourites. It can't be printed in English and it is totally valueless even as local colour. Indeed, Hemingway does not seem to have outgrown that stage of boyhood which exhibits itself in writing obscenities on walls of urinals. Ninety per cent of his readers will derive no more than a sense of reading something dirty which they do not understand, so why disfigure a great human story with those numerous italic sentences? The Spaniards are the foulest mouthed in Europe; I cannot imagine that the Australian "black-fellows" are so gross in their speech. But how much does it help to reproduce their familiar filth for readers who are merely puzzled thereby? My

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own reaction was entirely nauseating. And yet there is beauty and truth in every page.

Much of Hemingway's local colour is derived from what is really a trick. He thinks in Spanish and transliterates—not translates. "Forgive me if I have molested you speaking of things of the family—I know that all have the same troubles and it is more valuable not to speak of them." Now, *molestar* is the Spanish for "to vex" or "disturb", or "annoy", but not "to molest", which has a totally different meaning in English; and "more valuable" in English is merely a transliteration of *mas valen*, which actually means in this connection "better". Likewise "it is inutile" does not translate *no es util;* "it's useless" is what the phrase signifies.

You see the trick? It was first worked (and more successfully) by a colleague of mine who wrote a book in Welsh and then transliterated it into English. Always Hemingway describes Pilar, a marvellous character, as "the woman of Pablo". She was Pablo's wife, and in Spanish woman and wife are both *mujer*. Some of his Americanisms are deplorable. Typical: "Go on, Pilar, let us hear the viewpoint of the Professor." You can hear "the viewpoint" (bastard word) above the howling of the wind. Or can't you?

Withal there is the loveliest tenderness in some of his descriptions of the passion of Robert Jordan and Maria—unforgettable and starkly true to life—and endless instances of acute observation. When Jordan is telling Maria about Madrid and what they will do there, he says: "There is a park that is like a forest of trees from all parts of the world with their names on them, with placards that tell what trees they are and where they come from." "I would almost as soon go to the cinema," said Maria. How true to life—and some women! Yet I would give much to wander once again in the glorious park of Buen Retiro and the Botanic Gardens close by the Prado and the Ritz of happy memories.

"The night is far spent"—it's nearly 2 a.m.—and I must to bed—a noisy 'plane (one of our own, I fancy) has just gone over my library roof at a terrific speed and all I shall note about Dunne's *New Immortality* is that I have found not a thing in it that seems to me an improvement on the old. An immortality that can be defined only in terms of mathematics and diagrams leaves far too much to be desired.

Bitter-Sweet Evening

To the moralist his own particular age is always deckt in woeful weed and daisy, merging into madness. I was tempted so to ruminate one night at the Players Theatre, where I was the appreciative guest of Leonard Sachs with his delightful presentation of

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Ridgway's Late Joys, which originated, if I'm not mistaken, in Covent Garden some time before the War. The entertainment was exclusively pastiche—but, as such, entirely charming. Yet it left me sad, for I saw in it—just like listening to the wireless in these days—the end of an era. I'm an old playgoer, who has seen the early day, the heyday and death of the Music Hall, that peculiarly British institution which went out—nor will it ever come back—with the rise of the so-called "revue", which has never, save under the aegis of C. B. Cochran, approximated to the French original, and then only when it was associated with that other dramatic form known as "spectacle".

Having seen Lottie Collins do "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" (I once saw a "drama" so entitled at Collins's "geggie" in Glasgow!) with an abandon and a vivacity that the very title of the song can still bring to life in memory's movies, there was a tear in my applause for the young lady who faintly revived for me at the Joys that night that picture of a distant past. The clue verse—but one of scores in the original—accompanied with sly glances and a wink—

> You should see me out with Pa,
> Prim and *most* particular;
> All the boys say "there you are!"
> Pa says that's peculiar——

loses much of its point in an age when "sporty girls" never (well, hardly ever) go out with Pa and are never by any chance prim or most particular, as they were in the days of my youth. And the sudden shock of Lottie's frothy petticoats in a whirl of exciting disorder as she did her high-kicking to the chorus of "Ta-ra-ra-*boom*-de-ay" has no meaning, no implication, in an age when petticoats have given way to cami-knickers, or at most to one saucy short and flimsy garment with no material in it to kick.

Alas "the days of the Kerry dancers" did not come back to me, but with the younger generation, gathered under the chairman's hammer of Mr. Sachs, I could perceive that all was well—they were seeing as a new thing an old thing renewed. But all the spirit of it gone with the winds of fifty years! "Playmates", "Josh-u-a", "Clementine", and other early joys of my youth were all reproduced—with a new archness and *finesse* of satire, let it be said—but their effect on me was merely nostalgic.

Now I do not wish to be "nothing if not critical", where I saw so much talent, but all this harking back by the young generation to the days of old—of which they know little more than they do of the Greek theatre—seems to me foreboding. What I missed and what I long for is "the rapture of the forward view" (another Meredithism by the way)—and that's what I miss in all those broadcasts that are built upon "old favourites". Old favourites

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be hanged! It's a sterile world we are living in if we can't get even a rationed supply of new favourites. All the listeners to the wireless are not so old as I am and I can attribute only to sheer decadence this continual insistence on the old. I'm all for the new. That is the good way of life: the "forward view".

I have seen all the old favourites: Jenny Hill (the "vital spark"), Dan Leno, Arthur Roberts, T. E. Dunville, Vesta Victoria, Marie Lloyd, Bessie Bellwood, James Fawn, Chirgwin, John Jolly Nash, George Formby (senr.), Harry Randall, Gus Elen, Harry Weldon, Victoria Monks, aye, and a hundred more, some of whom are still surviving and "in wery good 'ealth", notably Harry Lauder, George Robey, Charles Coborn, Vesta Tilley; but it is sad to see so much genuine talent in the younger generation being spilled even on good reproductions instead of exploiting new ideas, new personality, new interpretations of this new and totally different age. An age in which the art forms are all looking back for inspiration means that we have come to an end instead of an advance. In the thing that is new there is always a verve, an enthusiasm, that no subsequent reproduction can recapture. Even from so low an art form as the French Can-can, which I have witnessed dozens of times in recent years in both London and Paris, the Maenad-fury of La Gulue, la Môme, and its other early exponents whom I saw at the Moulin Rouge wellnigh fifty years ago, has been largely lacking. Look forward, Mr. Sachs (who might be a *revenant* Lewis Waller), not back! But thanks no less for a bitter-sweet evening.

A Note on Lawrence of Arabia

HAPPENING to dip into the Letters of that amazing man Lawrence of Arabia, who away back in 1915, while still a subaltern, had a clearly conceived policy for the Near East which, one can imagine had it been realized, would have changed the whole complexion of the present War. In March of that year he wrote from Cairo to D. G. Hogarth "If Russia has Alexandretta it's all up with us in the Near East. And in any case in the next War the French will probably be under Russia's finger in Syria".

It looked like that when he wrote. What mortal man could then have foreseen that it would be Germany's finger "in the next war" that would press the button in the Syria of a renegade France? In the same letter, however, Lawrence says: "*One cannot go on betting that France will always be our friend.*" How right he was!

He also foresaw that France would jockey us into accepting the mandate for Jerusalem and Palestine. "Don't touch it with a barge pole" was his far-sighted advice. Here was genuine "prophecy". And what more prophetic than his closing words in this same

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letter written three years before the event? "We must I think look for a renaissance of the Turk when he has lost Constantinople. They will be much more formidable militarily—and less so politically." It is not too much to say that when Lawrence of Arabia died as the result of a stupid motor-cycle accident twenty years later (May 1935) Britain lost one man of vision and experience—a realist whose counsel in this War would have enabled our Generals to change the whole course of events in the Near East. He was no lover of the French imperialists.

My copy of Lawrence's *Letters* is so heavily annotated that I can see that at its first reading I was making desperate efforts to arrive at a dispassionate appreciation of the man, but find no evidence of success. It is not entirely a sympathetic personality that disengages itself from these self-revealing letters. But a great man is not necessarily, or even ordinarily, a lovable man. Lawrence is now engaging and sincere in the things he says and his way of saying them, and anon repellent, offensive, and obviously insincere, nor always grammatical in expressing them. A pretentious person one moment, a self-abrading sensitive soul the next. Yet it would appear that Winston Churchill in 1935 "hoped to see him quit his retirement and take a commanding part in facing the dangers which now threaten the country". Himself, in March 1935, he was contemplating the possibility of being asked to "undertake the reorganization of Home Defence", and if so would feel he "had no alternative but to take the job, as it was work of such national importance".

I can hardly doubt he would have done that job well, but the pother and fuss he makes about every bit of stuff he wrote—particularly *The Mint*—becomes so nauseating as you follow him through his letters that one feels the thing that will eventually emerge from his mountain of anxieties may have a dangerous resemblance to the *ridiculus mus*. The entire works of Shakespeare were probably written in less agitation and twittering than *The Mint*, and it's a million to point one of a penny that they will be read when *The Seven Pillars* and *The Mint* have been long forgotten. Though that would not worry Lawrence, who wrote, "as for after-death fame, it's a thing to spit at". He was hungry for the appreciation of the living and takes at its face value such guff as John Buchan's "You are the best living writer of English prose". Just three months before he died he wrote to a friend: "They'll learn, like we did." And he seldom saw an infinitive in the offing without charging it head down like a bull at a gate. Nevertheless, a great man, and it's a pity he did not live for Churchill to find the proper job for him in this Greatest War.

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A Very Old Invasion Port

MENTION in the nine o'clock bulletin that the R.A.F. had been bombing the little Brittany port of Quiberon made me sit up and take notice. . . . Ah, the years that have gone since I found myself there anxious to sail across the Bay of Quiberon to some point on the way to Vannes, after a visit to the Stone Age wonders of Carnac! I got a drunken fisherman and his mate to take me and my bike "across the stormy waters" for an absurdly small fee. The fisherman was certainly half seas over and still in his stocking feet although it was late afternoon. He grew lachrymose in telling me of the curse of Brittany—intermarriage. Most of the houses in Brittany, he alleged, had a small apartment built on to accommodate the family imbecile. He himself had two imbecile children, he confessed. "All due to intermarriage." I never have had the chance to investigate this matter further, but I have often wondered how much of the information he imparted may have had its origin in the wine he had been imbibing so copiously.

My main concern was that he should succeed in sailing his boat safely to a point whence I could make Vannes before nightfall. His mate was an old salt who had sailed to Scottish ports. "Ever been to Glasgow?" I asked. "No, but I've been to Parteek," said he (Partick was as much Glasgow as Battersea is London).

Quiberon has an interest today outside my personal recall of a half-forgotten adventure. It was there that one of the invasions of England came to grief.

Matthew Arnold in his "Stanzas Composed at Carnac" wrote—

> And there, across the watery way,
> See, low above the tide at flood,
> The sickle-sweep of Quiberon bay,
> Whose beach once ran with royal blood.

For it was here during the Seven Years' War that the French made elaborate preparations to invade England and had an army assembled at Vannes ready for the job. But Admiral Hawke, ancestor of the famous cricketing peer, put the lid on French sea power in Quiberon Bay on November 20, 1759, when he had the temerity to engage the French fleet under Admiral de Conflans amongst the rock-studded waters through which my tipsy pilot sailed me these umpteen years ago, and (to quote from my own encyclopedia) "utterly defeated the French admiral in a battle acknowledged to have been the greatest naval victory since the Armada. It crushed French naval power and prevented any possibility of an invasion". I am now looking forward to the day when I have to edit a new edition of *The Universal Encyclopedia* and put in a cross reference to Quiberon under the heading of "Invasion".

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When I did the first edition we gave only a definition of Invasion according to international law, but it will call for something much more extensive in the next issue.

King Alfonso: A Memory

WHEN the death of King Alfonso was announced on February 28, 1941, I wrote the following:

Wondering tonight what will happen to King Alfonso's royal remains. Fancy I've already related somewhere an interesting episode in which I took part at the Escurial some five or six months before Alfonso and his family had to "beat it" for safety beyond the Pyrenees. But I can't help recalling it tonight. The Kings of Spain since Charles V and Philip II, with Isabella II as the only Queen (consequently the cause of leering remarks by the sexy Spaniard), have been inhumed in the very beautiful marble sarcophagi which Philip, who was the actual founder of the Escurial, so thoughtfully provided for his successors in the sunlit crypt of the building. Only two of the marble receptacles remain untenanted.

"Just enough to see the Bourbons out," I boldly suggested to the custodian, himself a royal servant, mind you.

"No, sir," he instantly retorted, "there will always be two over (*siempre sobreran dos*)."

Yes, that was shortly before the revolution of 1931. Clearly the custodian knew a thing or two about the impending doom of the monarchy. If Franco should allocate one of those empty sepulchres to Alfonso XIII (unlucky number for him) the custodian of 1931 will have been proved a false prophet. But if they were to follow the historic practice of burying the body for seven years and then placing the residuum of dust and bones in one of the sarcophagi—they are really large marble caskets which accommodate little more than half the bulk of a human being—it would not be a matter for immediate decision. Cremation could settle it right away. There's no saying who will have the right of decision in seven years from now!

I recalled tonight, in thinking of the newly widowed Queen Ena of Spain (where she was known as Victoria), a story told to me years ago by Cedric Hardwicke. When he was performing—and what a masterly performance it was!—King Magnus in *The Apple Cart*, he had to deliver one of the longest monologues that ever fell to the lot of an actor. Queen Ena was present and sent for Hardwicke to come to the royal box, where she graciously congratulated him on his brilliant interpretation, saying, "what a feat of memory, all that long speech, surely it is a record?" To which the actor rather niftily replied: "Both sides of a record, your Majesty." Alas, this proved too sprightly for royal hearing. "We were not amused."

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He wrote "My Old Dutch"

I THINK that to a true bookman interested in men and manners even the poorest product is worth reading, at least skimming . . . always excepting fiction, which at its best is seldom more than entertainment. By way of illustrating this I wish to put on record the pleasure I have been experiencing from the reading a quite forgotten book whose publishing day I well remember—*Before I Forget*, by Albert Chevalier, which Fisher Unwin issued forty years ago. I've waited all that time to read it! Chevalier was forty when he wrote it, and it sounds comic today to think of anyone even beginning to think of forgetting at that youthful age. "Too old at forty," a current tag of that day which Alfred Harmsworth in his young years of splendid success had popularized, but which he soon ignored when, four years after Chevalier's premature autobiography, he himself had passed that critical age. He had not realized that modern medical science had enlarged the average lifetime of man by fifteen years. Chevalier, one of the most brilliant, truthful, sensitive and talented modern character actors, was still relatively young when he died at sixty-two. Many of his songs, such as "My Old Dutch" (which he wrote under a lamp-post one foggy night) and "The Future Mrs. 'Awkins", have reached the younger generation via the B.B.C., and would seem to stand the test of nearly sixty years very well.

As literature, *Before I Forget* is pretty poor stuff, but what a host of memories emerge from its pages when read by one who lived through most of the years they cover! Forty years ago the fight of the kill-joys against Sunday entertainment of all sorts, save bands in the parks, was going strong, and, despite the Sunday concert and cinema victories, it is still dragging on today against the theatre. Even now, in our latitudinarian 'forties, Chevalier couldn't have appeared on a Sunday concert platform, as character dress was essential to most of his impersonations—and that is against the law. A law that will presently be altered, I believe.

Then there is the perplexity of the theatre in its struggle to survive in wartime. I read with surprise that "There is no disguising the fact that, since the outbreak of hostilities in the Transvaal, the whole entertainment world has had a struggle to keep its head above water". Why that should have happened in the Boer War—most of which I had spent in Birmingham, where I have no recollection of the theatres being badly hit—I cannot understand. The theatre boomed in the Great War, and only the horrors and uncertainties of air attack prevented for a time its flourishing in "the present emergency". Now in 1943 it is again enjoying an ill-deserved "boom". And but for Noel Coward who is there to provide new plays for audiences that have else to accept the funeral bak'd meats of re-revived revivals?

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One of Chevalier's many anecdotes reads curiously today. He was a keen angler, and employed to punt him, from one roach swim to another, an old Thames boatman, who delivered himself of these reflections on the Spanish-American War: "It ain't fighting nowadays! In olden times they did fight! Cross-bows and halibuts"—he meant halberds, but he was a fisherman—"an' battle-axes, and them things. Ah! that was somethin' like playin' the game! Wot do they do now? They gits 'old of some of them there bombs, fills 'em with *linoleum* an' blows yer to blazes! An' they calls that fightin'! Ugh!"

Sadism and Sadness

ONE whose judgement in books has never failed me put a copy of *A Lost Lady* in my hand when I was about to start on a train journey. Until then I had known of Willa Cather, one of America's most distinguished novelists, only by reputation. Having started to read this short novel in the train I read nothing else that evening—not even the newspapers—until I had finished what is one of the finest of the many fine examples of story-telling that have come to us from America. I remember Miss Cather when she used to edit *McClure's Magazine* full thirty years ago. She did that job brilliantly. My old friend Sam McClure, greatest magazine man of his time, knew how to pick good editors; but it is seldom that an editor shows such creative genius as appears in *A Lost Lady*. The story runs to no more than 35,000 words, and yet there are no fewer than ten characters in it who stand out "in the round", as living creatures of life's drama, whom the reader is not likely to forget.

I am not likely to forget *A Lost Lady* for another reason. One of the dominating figures in the story is that of a horrid American type: the cruel, ruthless smalltown young man who tramples his way to material success as mercilessly as any Italian gangster, but contrives to keep within the law, often by qualifying himself as lawyer. We first meet this particular rascal when he is eighteen, trying to impress a group of quite decent youngsters by capturing a woodpecker and, with devilish dexterity and a tiny razor blade, slitting its eyes so that the poor creature amused him by its wild eyeless flight among the tall beeches . . . to the horror of the younger lads. With true insight the novelist does not bring him to a bad end, for it just isn't true that evildoers are always or often punished—except in novels, and melodramas. This loathsome young sadist is left flourishing. But I shall link him now with the actual Neapolitan nobleman who used to keep three thousand quails on his lovely estate, all with their eyes made blind by red hot bodkins—a scene that has often haunted my mind since I first heard of the facts in Naples nearly forty years ago.

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A rare instance of swift punishment for cruelty I find related in Prof. E. M. Butler's bulky life-study of Rainer Maria Rilke, the mystic German poet, to whose work, still little known in England, I have only recently been introduced by the same friend who has put me on to Willa Cather.

Not long ago I made Rilke's acquaintance by reading the slender volume *Poems*, translated by J. B. Leishman, first published by the Hogarth Press in 1934. As it was five years before a second printing was called for it will be seen that there is not yet any run on Rilke's poetry. I showed no burning desire to pursue my acquaintance with the German mystic: hence this hefty volume about the poet (an unpleasant fellow but pathologically interesting) which, having read, I may be more attracted to his poetry. Such, at least, is the hope of the friend who has lent me the book, and who knows but that I may become an understanding admirer of Rilke whom competent authorities do not hesitate to describe as " the greatest of modern poets " and—" the finest poet of the past fifty years " ? The study of modern poetry calls for some application, even a gritting of the teeth, but I'm beginning to think it's worth while.

One passage in Miss Butler's masterly study which, apart from any consideration of Rilke's poetry—indeed, so far, I am more attracted by his self-revealing letters—I have marked as worth pondering just now. It occurs in a letter to his friends the van der Heydts, written in October 1914: " The most that can be achieved at the moment is that the soul should survive; and misery and disaster are perhaps no more prevalent than before, only more tangible, more active, more apparent. For the misery in which humanity has lived daily since the beginning of time cannot really be increased by any circumstances whatsoever. But increase of insight into the unspeakable misery of being a human creature is possible, and perhaps all this is leading to it: a great downfall to make space for a great ascension."

That piece of dire pessimism was written when the war which his countrymen had thrust upon the world in 1914 was but two months gone and the Huns had every hope of winning. We have witnessed the great downfall, but not yet the great ascension. How Rilke would have faced the present world-lunacy had not " personal death " come to him in 1926 (finding him rather a craven at the end) one can but guess. He had not even the guts to put his head in a gas oven, which seemed to be his predestined end. His philosophy of despair has no real message for the world today, but his strange eventful life will engage students of psychology for generations and his equally strange, pale, bloodless, yet beautiful poetry is likely to attract ever-widening interest when the mind of the intellectual world can turn again to other things than war.

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TAILPIECE. Since the above was written I have become a regular devotee of Willa Cather. Besides *A Lost Lady*, I have read with sustained pleasure *My Mortal Enemy*, *Lucy Gayheart*, *My Antonia*, *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*, *The Song of the Lark*,—and rejoice to think there's others I have still to read. In an age of long-winded writers she is resolutely opposed to all needless extension of her narrative and accomplishes her fresh, strongly individualized presentation of American characters with the incisive clearness of a cameo graver. But as for Rilke my reactions to his poetry after two readings of his ten *Duino Elegies* is definitely *diminuendo*. In using that much overwrought word " Sadism " I have done so in what I believe to be its proper connotation, cruelty committed for the sheer personal pleasure of the inhuman creature inflicting the torture. The true sadist is happily rare and the Marquis de Sade, whose name denotes the thing, was a madman. Journalists are too apt today to call any sort of cruelty " sadistic ". Unless there is a mad joy in its performance there is no sadism. To be cruel only to be kind is not unheard of. But that is never the state of the sadistic mind.

Plutarch, Gibbon and the Bricklayer

ONE of the tasks I set myself early in this War was to read through Plutarch's *Lives*, just as during the four years of the First Great War I read through Gibbon's *Decline & Fall*, Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and other fairly ponderous classics, not to mention a complete rereading of the Old Testament. Those satisfactions of the literary mind were in a way blessings of the black-out which kept such of us who were not band-leaders or saxophonists much more at home than had been our habitude. But these exhilarating tasks in reading were purely for personal enlightenment or pleasure, in no sense immediate to any writing of my own.

Where a good knowledge of Greek is essential I must place myself submissively in the care of the translator, though I have heard of an authority on Etruscan antiquities who did not even know the Greek alphabet from which the Etruscan is obviously derived. In this matter of Greek I am now reduced to a state of extreme indigence, having at no time been affluent. I have noticed in the reading of Plutarch, the translators of the edition on my shelves being Aubrey Stewart and George Long (the latter eminent as a classical scholar in the first half of the last century and at twenty-three successful against Macaulay as Fellow of Trinity, Cambridge), that numerous pages of the *Lives* read like authentic passages by Gibbon. And I wish I were able to study the original Greek in order to determine whether these resemblances are as characteristic of Plutarch's Greek as of Gibbon's English, in which case they may have influenced Gibbon in weaving the colourful fabric of his own sumptuous

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style. Possibly the real explanation is that the translators unconsciously modelled their English renderings of the Greek on Gibbon's prose. Thanks to Stewart and Long, however, I have had great profit of old Plutarch, having read through all four volumes of Bell's delightful edition. And my admiration for this old Greek genius, who (as an American might express it) had all biographers ancient and modern skinned to death, has grown with every life I've read, though his efforts to " parallel " them sometimes fail so patently that one would prefer he had not made the attempt.

From his full and vivid narratives of Pompey and Caesar one feels that power politics today is precisely what power politics was in the last days of the great Republic—the filthy scramble of unscrupulous men for personal power, wealth, and fame. Read Plutarch's literary portraits of these two mighty names in Roman history and you will think less of each than you do by accepting them in the briefer glimpses you get in the pages of the historian who is concerned more with events than personalities. But Cato (the younger) shines " like a good deed in a naughty world ". There is no public man alive in all the lands of Ancient Rome today—Italy, " all Gaul ", Germania—with the courage of a Cato. For a good reason : he'd be dead before nightfall. Which is another way of saying that the dictatorship of Fascism has outdone the terrorism of Caesar. Though at the last Cato had to be his own executioner he had fought a long and fearless fight for the Republic which Caesar and Pompey between them destroyed. Plutarch has the rare gift of seeing his great men objectively and despises no incident or anecdote that helps to fill out his estimate of their character. What a " columnist " he would have been had there been any daily papers round about A.D. 100 !

Plutarch, by the way, was a whale on what we call " casualties ". I suspect many of his statistics. His account of Cæsar's desperate battle with the Nervii (German barbarians), when " out of sixty thousand only five hundred are said to have escaped ; and three senators out of four hundred ", I just don't believe. Nor will I credit his statement that, in another of Cæsar's battles with the Germans, " out of those who had crossed the river there were slaughtered to the number of four hundred thousand ". And my imagination boggles at his assertion that Cæsar celebrated his triumph over Juba in Libya (Libya was the constant scene of warfare in the days of Ancient Rome) with a banquet at which there were twenty-two thousand triclinia. As a triclinium comprised three couches, each accommodating three persons, placed around a table, leaving the fourth side free for the slaves to serve the food and drink, that meant a total sit-down of 198 thousand ! What would the late Sir Joseph Lyons have said to that ?

Being an inveterate doubter I always check up astonishing state-

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ments as I read them, and I think that my friend Joseph McCabe, a great scholar and brilliant historian, is occasionally too ready to accept the figures of ancient writers always bent on astonishing their readers. Thus in his brilliant and enthralling *Golden Ages of History*, which I was reading again with renewed delight quite recently, he says that in Cordova during the golden age of the Caliph Abd-el-Rahman III there were no fewer than 80,455 shops. Checked against the population of the town—to which I have paid two visits to study the sparse scraps that remain of its Moorish glory, the peerless mosque alone surviving in any approach to its original condition—80,455 shops meant one for each eleven inhabitants—" which is absurd ". The population in the time of Abd-el-Rahman is not believed to have exceeded one million. But I heartily commend Mr. McCabe's vibrant descriptions of the Golden Ages as worth any half-dozen best-selling novels of the day.

My mention of Gibbon reminds me that one day in 1941 when my train had to make rather a wide detour through Sussex by reason of a temporary hold-up on another line (" enemy action ") we stopped at Sheffield Park. A prosperous-looking passenger of bucolic mien confessed he had never heard of such a place, though he would have claimed to know every town and village in Sussex. No use telling him about the friendship of Lord Sheffield and Gibbon, who spent so much time together at Sheffield Place, for which this was the station; and that we had stopped at one of the county's many literary landmarks. One might as well have asked him if he knew the different localities of the firmament in which to look for Betelgeux or the Nebula in Andromeda. Speaking of the incident next day to a London bookseller, he said I would be surprised to know that he is selling a complete seven-volume edition of *The Decline and Fall* to an East End bricklayer, who buys a volume at a time whenever he has the money to spare. He has usually read through the last volume he bought before he comes for the next. He has just collected the fifth and had remarked that he was rather sorry there would be only two more! That was good hearing, but in my long years of correspondence with all sorts of readers throughout the world it did not surprise me, for I have had innumerable instances of the most intelligent appreciation of the great English classics from readers in the humbler ways of life. A keen appreciation of great literature can make the lowly labourer peer of his millionaire employer. Possibly superior; almost certainly richer in the enduring things of the mind.

Man v. Termite for World Mastery

" COUNTRY life is not all it's cracked up to be," someone said to me the other day. And as an inveterate townsman upon whom, at a

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late day, the rural way of life has come less from choice than circumstance, I was inclined to agree. Harvest bugs, for example. I've made my first acquaintance with them in these autumnal days. I thought at first I had contracted some sort of blood disorder . . . itching here, itching there, and a baker's dozen of focal points of discomfort arising as I scratched from ankle upleg! With relief I found that many others in my neighbourhood were suffering similarly. Remarkable how one's discomfort lessens with the knowledge that others are in like state.

I had suffered from the "bicho colorado" (*lit.* red insect) in South America, and mosquitoes have at times robbed the most enchanting sub-tropical scenes of all their charm for me, but these minute harvest bugs whose acquaintance I have made so recently—"eh, it's been a rare year fur tham dratted 'arvest mites", said a shepherd of the Downs to me yesterday, giving them their proper name—are as effective itch producers as any South American bicho. Nor is it any consolation to know that this absurdly tiny red devil belongs to the family of *Trombidiidae* and, as a relative of the bicho colorado, has quite a surprising life-story.

His abundance this year is due to the long lush grass which the August rains have engendered. Fortunately ammonia quickly reduces the irritation his activities create. But bad as the plague of insect life may be—insects preceded Man by millions of years and will probably survive him by millions more—it is nothing to what might have been, as I read in J. B. S. Haldane's *Fact and Faith* that if all the existing varieties of only one species of fly, *Drosophila Melanogaster*, could be suitably crossed there isn't enough matter in all the known heavenly bodies, and probably not in the universe, to make *one* fly of each of the possible kinds simultaneously! How's that for being fruitful and occupying the Earth? According to Maeterlinck it was really a case of touch-and-go for mastery of the Earth between the termite (the so-called white ant) and man. Nature in her infinite variety becomes somewhat alarming to contemplate close up. From what Sir Charles Sherrington explains in his astonishing book *Man on his Nature* I am almost persuaded that each one of us is really a travelling termitary!

Only the other day I was contemplating the termite, for I was comparing bomb-wounded London to a vast termitary. Any injury to the immobile, cone-shaped home of a few billions of termites immediately brings millions of workers marshalled by their blind soldiers to the point where their cement-hard stronghold has been cracked and instantly the work of repair proceeds with the exuding of a sticky fluid from each of the million workers, which quickly solidifies and seals the breach. Well, that's what's happening all over London where you can see innumerable workers repairing the damaged buildings that are not too damaged so that "business as

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usual" may be announced. But the white ant has even greater affinity with the Nazi order than with any other, as these insects are all slaves of a system which is completely careless of the individual, who exists only for the benefit of the termitary-state. On the whole it was a good thing that the white ant was not allowed by nature to possess the earth to the exclusion of human kind, for inglorious as most of our lives may be, I think they are better worth living than any life to be found in even the best run termitary.

Witchcraft and Houdini

EVERYTHING that William Seabrook, the very original American travel-writer, offers to the book-reading public commands my attention. I suppose I have read all his books, excepting only *Americans All*, and while far from agreeing with many of the opinions he expresses I have not yet found a dull page in any of them. I share with him a keen interest in the occult, yet I cannot honestly say he has added one iota to my knowledge of the mysteries of life. For he offers no solution of most of the uncanny things he describes with such gusto and dramatizes so effectively. The "zombis" in Haiti, for example. I *know*, and you know, and Seabrook knows *there are no zombis*: recently dead negroes disinterred and by magic made to function as living animals without souls. He says he has seen them, and leaves it at that. The comment is the Cockney's "that be blowed for a tale". But a jolly good tale, let me tell you, like all his voodoo stuff in *The Magic Island*. All his books have high entertainment value, as they say in Hollywood and at Elstree.

Well, I spent five or six hours reading his latest effort, *Witchcraft* (kept me up till nearly two a.m.), and it may be because I have long been familiar with most of Frazer's writings on magic and religion that I didn't get the thrill of a new idea or discovery of any sort out of this vivacious book of Seabrook's. Yet I was glad to have all the old familiar stuff served up afresh in the inimitable Seabrook manner. The thousands who would find Frazer and his *Golden Bough* dull will find Seabrook "a riot". I mention this volume for another purpose than the recommending of a book worth reading. A third of *Witchcraft* is concerned with "The Witch and Her Doll"—the oldest of all magic. There is somebody you hate, so you get a witch-doctor, or black-magic man, to make a doll that roughly represents the object of your hatred. Then, with various incantations the magician sticks pins into the vital parts of the doll, and sure enough the living victim suffers and dies as the process of pin-pricking the doll develops.

The eight adventures which Seabrook so gruesomely describes in this ancient department of magic may all be true—"truth with frills" might be his motto. Like the old actor who asked to be

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allowed to play a small part in *Hamlet* saying " I'll put frills on it, laddie ! " Seabrook very properly emphasizes the absolute necessity that the victim must be as superstitious as the necromancer : both must believe in the potency of magic and the victim must somehow be made aware of the evil power that is working against him.

There is in the story by the French author, Frederic Boutet, in my *Masterpiece Library of Short Stories* (I published it first in a journal I was editing thirty years ago) an idea which is germane to that of the witch-doctor's auto-suggestion. A prisoner condemned to death is, by agreement with the authorities who are sympathetic to the experiment, placed in a bath of warm water while a doctor pretends to open a vein in the condemned man's arm so that he may bleed to death instead of being guillotined. Slowly the water begins to redden, and when it is of the colour of blood the prisoner is found to be dead. Yet it was an aniline dye that the doctor put in the bath. That's only a story, but the idea would, I'm sure, work just as well as any of Seabrook's death-dealing dolls. Incidentally, the story of " Doll de Luxe in London ", for all its circumstantial detail, leaves me reaching for a biggish pinch of salt.

But, what d'you think?—a former London colleague of mine, Hessell Tiltman, now a brilliant newspaper correspondent in New York, writes in the *Daily Sketch* : " Another bit of hot news for Adolf is that a bunch of Chicago residents who believe in witchcraft have declared a private war on Hitler and are engaged in an experiment designed to hit Hitler by methods perfected by African witch-doctors. These consist of sticking pins into the vitals of an effigy of Hitler while chanting jungle incantations guaranteed to make the victim feel out of sorts even at a range of 5,000 miles. The theory is that if Hitler hears about this he will pine away, so I am broadcasting the glad news." This very thought occurred to me in reading Seabrook, and possibly it has been the American appearance of *Witchcraft* that prompted this Chicago bunch to try their hand at a bit of black magic. They haven't an earthly unless " Hitler hears of it "—and he won't.

One of several persons, celebrities in the world of magic and the occult, mentioned in *Witchcraft* is Houdini, the famous escapologist. On a day in the spring of 1920 he called at my office to discuss the treatment of magic in the *Universal Encyclopedia*, which I was then editing, the first fortnightly part having appeared only a few days before. I saw a good deal of Houdini during his stay in London at that time, and for years after he seldom let a month pass without sending me a postcard or short letter or newspaper cutting about his work as a " mystifier " (the description he preferred). We had long discussions on spiritualism, and on various visits to my editorial office, or at lunch, he showed me close-ups of some of his tricks

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which, much to his amusement, were being gravely discussed by Conan Doyle and others as "materializing and de-materializing".

A typical example: sitting on the edge of my writing table he takes a piece of string, about two feet in length, out of his right waistcoat pocket, holds it up in front of me taut between forefinger and thumb of both hands, "cut this string anywhere you like" he says. I snip it in the middle; he bunches the two pieces together between finger and thumb and then pulls the string taut again: a perfect uncut whole. "That's what Conan Doyle called de-materializing and re-materializing", he says. As a matter of fact an amateur conjuring friend of mine has three or four ways of doing the trick. The Conan Doyle theory was applied equally to Houdini's box trick in which, having been handcuffed and placed inside a box that was securely roped outside by persons quite unknown to him and a curtain hung around it, he stepped out from behind the curtain in a minute or so, the box remaining as it had been roped and the handcuffs found inside on opening.

Again: scene the Savoy restaurant, Houdini, two others and myself sit down to lunch. Houdini takes a packet of needles from his pocket, places them in his mouth and takes a glass of water by way of cocktail. Lunch over, one of us asks, "Now what about those needles?" To which the mystifier responds by asking one of the party to pull the end of a thread suddenly seen projecting between his lips, and lo, the needles reappear strung neatly on the thread. Were they in his mouth all the time he was lunching? (I don't think, papa.) I don't remember if he tried this on the spiritualist investigators, but my amateur conjurer has at least two very plausible ways of doing it. I would advise no beginner to try either of them.

I wish I had the leisure to write at greater length about Houdini, for he was one of the most remarkable persons I have known, and was keenly interested in the eternal question, "If a man die, shall he live again"; but at the moment I am concerned only in adding this to certain references to this remarkable man that appear in the appendix to *Witchcraft*: he told me with great seriousness that his mother, to whom he was devoted, and who, like himself, had an open mind on the problem of survival, made a pact with him that he should at a certain hour of every day for some years sit in a darkened room all alone and mentally receptive, so that her spirit would, if it could, communicate with him. This he faithfully did, with an absolutely negative result. After his tragic death there were stories of his having "got through" to his widow, which should have been disposed of by her producing in 1938 a film *Religious Racketeer* as an exposé of Spiritualism.

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Monsters and Fairies

A NEWSPAPER cutting, dated January 1, 1934, which I have just found in a drawer, has the following headlines: "Is the Monster a Crocodile? Woman's Loch Ness Theory. Pet that Escaped. Fishery Expert Sees Eight Humps. Seal; Tortoise; Diplodocus; Crocodile?" These were happy days when we could listen with amusement to every ludicrous suggestion and to many an imaginative liar theorizing about the mysterious denizen of Loch Ness. Alas! poor Monster, where now is your place of lowly rest? In these days of Total War eight humps would be far too small an endowment.

If the Loch Ness folly taught us nothing else it at least underlined Psalm CXVI, 11, and reminded us that David need not have been so punctilious in admitting his hastiness of speech. Also it proved that nothing can equal an abundance of evidence in the smothering of truth. Give the common man a chance to get his name printed and there's no limit to the things he will swear to have seen. Somebody even saw the Loch Ness monster as a brontosaurus pulling its vast bulk out of the undergrowth and lumbering across the motor road into the sedgy water of the loch—an operation that would have taken the slow-moving creature time enough to allow the observer to make a dozen snapshots of it. As Hitler, with a wisdom almost beyond the capacity of a degenerate's brain, has pointed out, when you're telling a whopper let it be a real whacking whopper, none of your tiny little fibs; that is if you want it to be believed. How right he was.

Another echo of the puerile past, "Fairies Photographed: An Epoch-Making Event Described by A. Conan Doyle", came to me where I found the Loch Ness clipping. But it takes us back no less than twenty years. The photographs appeared in a well known magazine whose editor, long a personal friend of mine, showed them to me before they were published. As a shrewd old sceptic, he chuckled at the simplicity of Conan Doyle, but as a wise old editor he got away with an amusing "stunt". The fairies were of the most obvious children's story variety—the kind that are "down at the bottom of the garden". In order to accept them as genuine photographs of genuine pixie folk, you had to believe that Arthur Rackham and all the hundreds of artists who had drawn fairies for picture books for a century or more had by some uncanny inner vision limned the creatures of their imagination to the minutest detail of the objective living (possibly immortal) creatures seen in these garden photographs. Well, the fairies are one with the monster now, and I am not conscious of any results from the "epoch-making event". Goebbels has put both monster yarns and fairy stories at a great disadvantage. But, think for a moment

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of those carefree days of twenty years ago when such things could be!

Scores of supposedly sane persons rushed in to support the credulous Conan Doyle with personal accounts of real fairies and gnomes which they had seen. Fact. I could have given my own testimony, if I had cared. Thus, at the age of eight in the kitchen of a small flat in the Stirling Road, Glasgow, one night when I was all alone I saw a little gnome, not more than nine inches high, standing on the kitchen table and laughing at me. He had no wings, such as the gnome in one of the above-mentioned photos is sporting, but I remember that he had an intensely red cap and bright green was the prevailing note of his clothing. Just the sort of little chap my fairy specialists used to draw for me some twenty years later when I was making picture-books for boys and girls in Paternoster Row. Just how my gnome, or brownie, or pixie, or whatever he was, withdrew from my young life almost as soon as he had entered it, I cannot recall. But I never saw him again. I am sure, however, that the imagination of many a child of eight or nine must be able as mine at that age to project from the mind on to a kitchen table as good a pixie as the one I saw. The difficulty is the photographing —it takes such a darn long time for me even now to get my Leica focused and ready for clicking.

"O.K." and "Cullaful"

THAT "well of English undefiled" (which was Dan Chaucer) is being mightily muddied in these late days with America's contribution to the mother tongue. Language is a living thing and must grow from day to day by borrowings from everywhere: must reflect every new facet of thought and fact the world over. But the well of English has suffered horrid pollution since Hollywood imposed its Americanisms on the so-called English-speaking world —one of the largest of the many undesirable contributions of the Film to our modern life and speech. It is not a matter of "borrowing" but of imposition. Myself I have always loathed "Okay", and yet I find myself by the sheer pressure of its popular usage "falling for it", like scores of other Americanisms to which I have more readily taken; never in speaking, only as a quickly pencilled symbol O.K. on a proof slip or the like. Spoken, it is no shorter than "All right" and twice the length of "Right".

An amusing instance of okaying was once provided by Lord Beaverbrook in his broadcast account of his Soviet mission. To the admirably concise statement of the points on which agreement was reached between the representatives of the three signatory powers America's representative said "Agreed", and Britain's (according to Lord Beaverbrook) said "Okay". We must

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remember that Lord Beaverbrook is a Canadian and is perhaps less concerned about the English language than about the material survival and progress of the British Commonwealth. Even so, he will surely admit on reflection that the comic element was not absent from the contrast in these two responses. I thank Mr. Harriman for that " Agreed". Here is an appropriate quotation from our little remembered sixteenth-century poet, Samuel Daniel:

> And who, in time, knows whither we may vent
> The treasure of our tongue, to what strange shores
> This gain of our best glory shall be sent,
> T' enrich unknowing nations with our stores ?
> What worlds in th' yet unformed Occident
> May come refin'd with th' accents that are ours ?

Who knows, indeed ! If old Samuel Daniel could awake from his three centuries of sleep to sit through a full-blooded Hollywood film he would feel that waking had been pain and take the nearest way back to his graveyard.

It happens that one of the most pleasantly profitable hours I spend every week is devoted to the News Theatre, and many times I feel that the entertainment and instruction to be had in one of these represent better value for money than some of the over-praised full-length films I have recently seen. But as the lion's share in the programmes at the News Theatre is nearly always supplied from America, there is, I think, some danger of our English speech and native idiom being overlaid by Americanisms, not all which are worthy of acceptance. Some of the commentaries spoken by Americans strike so dreadfully on the English ear that one's sense of hearing rejoices in passing from one of these too American sound tracks to the purer and more agreeable speech from the lips of Leslie Mitchell, or some of the other B.B.C. announcers whose voices are occasionally used by British film makers.

My spirits always fall when I see a travel piece from America announced, for while I know that its photography will be impeccable, I also know that I am going to listen to the most banal comments in the least attractive phraseology, with one dreadful word recurring like the leitmotif in a more tuneful sort of composition. That word is pronounced and repeated four or five times in a five-minute film as " cullaful ". The word in itself is not offensive if its use is occasional, but in America it almost rivals " wonnerful " as a sound expressing an idea for which the speaker has not a sufficient vocabulary. I even heard an American commentator, in presenting a quite admirable film one night, twice use the unknown word " momento ", which I took to be a mispronunciation of " memento ", and I just can't let that go without mention.

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I think it is incumbent on all English school teachers to warn their children against having their speech corrupted by many of the sounds that accompany American films, and it might be a good exercise to get young people to note down any of the peculiar expressions they hear and report them at school for the teacher's opinion of their use.

"No Mourning By Request"

On my way to town one morning I couldn't help admiring a young sergeant pilot at East Croydon station when the train stopped there. He seemed the veritable embodiment of all the manly virtues. Half a dozen ribbons below his wings showed that he had many a Nazi to his credit, and he looked so spick and span and gloriously young that he would have been a perfect model for an ideal picture of British youth. All the folk on the platform were admiring him too. One young fellow most of all, who himself wore a decoration on his sleeve . . . a diamond of black material! This I regard as the stupidest form of mourning. Why advertise to the world that a member of your family has passed away? . . . especially when the procession tombwards is being so greatly augmented these days. I think I shall add to my instructions for the suppression of mourning when I pop off " particularly no armlets or diamonds of crape ".

I am old enough to remember when a funeral in Glasgow was about as comic as the Chinese affair: postilions in white breeches with black silk hats and cockades, black horses in tandem, preceded on foot by two or four mutes in knee breeches with streaming crape bands on their hats, long black staffs with black bows carried in their hands, deep white " weepers " on the cuffs of their sleeves! Believe it or not, that's a faithful record of the funeral of a schoolgirl whose father kept a junk shop opposite the Royal Infirmary sixty years ago. That silly black diamond sewn on the sleeve is the last token of a custom that derived from ages of less enlightenment. I'm all for " no mourning by request ", but I am sentimental enough not to subscribe to " no flowers ".

Two Thrillers of Long Ago

In these strange days of skeleton dailies and constricted weeklies many little things of human interest pass unnoted or so meagrely recorded as to escape the reader. A recent example: " Mrs. Amy Fargus, widow of Hugh Conway, the novelist, left £1,282." What an echo of the past! Memory takes me back more than fifty years. Two of the pioneer stories of the modern " thriller " type were *Called Back* (1883), by Hugh Conway, and *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1887), by Fergus Hume. When they were flooding the book-

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stalls half a century ago you saw copies of them in the hands of travellers everywhere—literally they were "read by everyone". They set fashions. But they came out as single spies, whereas the thrillers of today debouch in battalions from the book factories. They had scant literary merit, but they were thumping good yarns and held youth from play and old men by the chimney corner. Neither Conway nor Hume ever repeated their first successes.

Hume kept on doggedly writing novels for forty years after his "smash hit" of 1887. He was in his early forties when I first met him in London and when he died in 1932 at seventy-three his one world-wide success as a story-teller before he was thirty must have seemed like a dream to him.

Conway, whose name was Frederick John Fargus, took his pseudonym from the training ship *Conway* on which he had served for a time. He died so long ago as 1885, when he was only thirty-eight; so that his widow has survived him by no fewer than fifty-six years. That seems a long time to cherish memories of a dead husband, and one might imagine that his image would have grown dim and blurred over such a stretch of years; but the more I study the marvel of the mind (I'm reading just now *The Myth of the Mind*, by Frank Kenyon, in the Thinker's Library, brilliant and controversial) the more am I prepared to believe that, especially where love is, even seventy or eighty years need not erase from memory the vivid early impressions imprinted on the grey matter of the brain where mind and memory operate.

Twenty Eggs for Breakfast!

HAVING so greatly enjoyed my recently-made acquaintance with the novels of Willa Cather, I have to confess to experiencing something like a rebuff in attempting to renew a very slight acquaintance with the work of a very popular author—the late John Buchan. (I am not interested in him as Lord Tweedsmuir.) Quite at random I took up *Huntingtower*. I liked the name and remembered that from among the numerous products of Buchan's busy pen I had read but two or three. *John Burnet of Barns* took me back some forty years and was recalled as a story in the Stevensonian strain, *Don Quixote of the Moors* I seemed to remember as a slighter but pleasing effort in the same manner, read about the same time (no mention of it appears in the *Who's Who* list of the author's works) and *The Thirty Nine Steps*. These were all in the long catalogue that I had read, and the feeling that here was an author to whom I should have given more time possessed me as I started out joyfully with Dickson McCunn, retired grocer of bookish tastes, and elderly hero of *Huntingtower*, in search of romance. A most exhilarating start. Buchan's delightful mastery of the Glesca dialect as exemplified

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by McCunn at times and always, in its lower depths, by the "Gorbals Diehards", could not fail to rejoice one whose youth had been spent in St. Mungo's grey, grimy, but go-ahead city.

All went well until we got to Huntingtower, when began a great stir about stolen jewels, a prisoned maiden, and a bunch of characters who could have walked out of any boys' story paper in the last fifty years or so. All told, mind you, in the most vigorous and scholarly style. I felt that I knew where the Gorbals Die-Hards originated: it was in the Den at Thrums, and somehow under the lead of Tommy and Corp Shiach they were more credible. So having finished the chapter "Of the Princess in the Tower" I skipped the next two hundred pages and read the last two just to make sure that it all came out according to the formula of my old friend Charles Pearce, who, forty years ago, used to keep five or six yarns of a similar kind (not so finely written, be it said) running simultaneously in as many different boys' papers. It seems a pity to find so much good writing and power of characterization, as well as humour, devoted to this sort of story.

One passage in *Huntingtower* reads quaintly in those rationed days: Mrs. Morran "had been baking that morning, so there were white scones and barley scones, and oaten farles and russet pancakes. There were three boiled eggs for each of them . . . there was skim milk cheese" . . . but that's enough! Yet I can make those who like eggs, boiled, fried, or poached, still more jealous of the plenteous past by turning to P. G. Hamerton's *A Painter's Camp in the Highlands*. Malcolm was the name of an extraordinary Highlander who used to do the author the honour of visiting him at his camp on the island of Inishail in Loch Awe. "By way of preparing himself for the more serious business of breakfast, it is a custom of his, when eggs are obtainable, to beat a dozen of them together in a basin with whisky and sugar, and eat the whole raw mess with a spoon, like soup." That was just a sort of cocktail, for when breakfast came along with trout, mutton chops and eggs, Malcolm had the nerve to complain because he was given only four boiled eggs! "Go and boil six and twenty," he said to the serving man, "you'll find two dozen in the box in my boat." The author privately instructed his servant just to boil another four for the ravenous Highlander "which, with the four he had eaten, the plates of mutton chops, the plates of trouts, the loaf of bread, and the six cups of a strong coffee, I considered a sufficient breakfast". Twenty eggs for his breakfast! Are we one-egg-a-fortnighters envious?

Clothes and the Man

THERE were two candidates for election in an American town. One abnormally tall, the other absurdly short. A supporter of the first

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said in a speech that while his rival had to stand on two packing-cases to be seen by the audience, his own candidate was so tall they had to dig a hole for him to stand in to address his hearers. "The truth," said the little chap, on hearing this, "is that my opponent has a hole dug for him because he's only happy when he's up to his neck in dirt." If we get much more of this ministerial talk, to which I have just been listening, about the "honour" of wearing shabby clothes we may arrive at the stage of being urged not to waste soap on cleaning our necks, to swear off hot baths, to avoid hair cut and shave until end of the War.

There is no particular honour in presenting a beggarly and bedraggled appearance to one's fellowmen so long as we are able to live in our own homes and have not "gone to earth" like the fox. The Bolsheviks, taking their cue from their leaders, who had assumed the outward guise of horny handed sons of toil in order to "dress the part", have produced (as I am informed by various credible visitors to Stalin's Russia) nationwide a populace habited after the manner of the British working man in his work-a-day garb. In this I see no merit. "Dressing the part" is an old idea with demagogues. Keir Hardie, parliamentary pioneer of the I.L.P. arrived at the House (preceded by a brass band), got-up as the horny-handed son of toil he had been, when he was elected for West Ham in 1892. As a wag of the time put it—

> With band, cloth cap, and workman's clothes,
> I come, the new M.P.,
> I keir for nobody, no not I,
> And nobody keirs for me.

So Lenin and Stalin, with their cloth caps of the proletariat, followed a long way after—to what mightier issues!

To be well dressed and clean are proper instincts in any civilized community, and to spread the idea that outworn clothes and abstention from refinements of toilette can pass for virtues is both foolish and dangerous. "Honest sweat" is still sweat and by any other name would smell as foul. Let's use these sixty-six coupons to best advantage and let's make ourselves as presentable as our means will allow. Don't begin to take a pride in appearing a down-and-out. Else we become down-and-outs in spirit as well as appearance.—"For the apparel oft proclaims the Man." Nothing is better for our morale than to look our best . . . stopping always this side of dandyism.

A friend of mine in the colonial nursing service was taken ill at a remote Uganda station, and had to be carried by native bearers some hundred miles to Dar-es-Salaam: an operation at Guy's in London was indicated. One night she had to rest at the bungalow of a young English official in the administrative service. He was

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all alone in his forest home, seated at dinner, in dress clothes! On this exceptional visitor asking him if he had expected company, he assured her that he rarely had a caller and never before an invalid lady; but he felt that in his loneliness the only safeguard from falling into slovenly ways was to dress up every evening as he had been in the habit of doing at home in England.

Apropos of this topic, I read with some interest the other day that Sir Nicholas Gratton-Doyle, who had just died, was "one of the few M.P.s who still kept to the top hat, a black hat in the winter and grey in summer". It is interesting to know that any Member of Parliament still lagged so far behind the changing fashions of our times, and I look back a little incredulously upon my own days when I arrived in town each morning with a silk hat and frock coat to carry on my editorial work, which was so much better discharged in an old jacket and a loose collar as soon as I discarded the conventional garb of respectability and sat down at my desk. Sir Oswald Mosley's grandfather was distinguished for little else than having worn to the end of his days an old-fashioned silk hat of the shape that Tony Weller wore when seated on the dickey of his stage coach—that and being the founder of the standard bread movement in 1911.

The clinging to fashions that have become entirely obsolete is an indication of a certain personal vanity, just as the wearing of anything so stupid as a silk hat forty years ago was the opposite—for it was conforming to the general. But to break away from a foolish, long-established custom by introducing something more practical need carry no suspicion of vanity about it. Kennedy Jones, who was Lord Northcliffe's very competent associate in the founding of the *Daily Mail*, was one of the first, if not the very first, to get rid of the silk hat and frock coat habit by appearing in Fleet Street with a "boater" and lounge suit. And now the boater is almost as obsolete as the "tile", having succumbed to the Trilby. I hope that our new and unexpected collaboration with Soviet Russia may not presage a vogue for the cloth cap of the coalminer, the cowherd, and the golfer. But fashion's freaks are beyond controlling, and one never knows. I still have two or three top hats stowed away somewhere; the most up to date has, like Dick Phenyl's dress trousers, "been going to funerals for years", also to weddings, and not infrequently to dinner parties until Hitler put the lid on that side of our social enjoyment.

Four Lines Immortal

THE happy thought of an American publisher in presenting our Prime Minister with the manuscript of Arthur Hugh Clough's poem "Say Not the Struggle Naught Availeth", from which Mr.

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Churchill quoted with such dramatic effect in his historic broadcast to America, reminds me that I have a confession to make. The last and best known of the four stanzas which comprise the poem has been so often on my lips for more than half-a-century that I might well call it my favourite quotation. I have grown up with it, but had never bothered to verify its authorship—which I thought was Browning's. Nor is that a surprising slip of memory, for both the rhythm and the thought of the poem are eminently characteristic of Browning. I confess, however, never to have made any special study of Clough's poetry, which is mainly forgotten today, since I first made its acquaintance perhaps too sketchily long ago. Even his most important work, " The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich ", I know only in extracts that provide no immediate urge towards the whole. I recall his " Easter Day ", a poem written at Naples in 1849, which is typical of his religious indecisions, but which stays in my mind, I think, for its first line " Through the great sinful streets of Naples, as I past ". This line accounted for the disappointment of my first visit there nearly forty years ago, the great sinful streets proving the foulest jumble of alleys, wynds and obscure courtyards, enclosed within interminable and unattractive highways leading nowhere in particular. In later years, as I can testify from at least five subsequent visits, Mussolini, before he was bitten by the bug of empire-snatching, had effected vast improvements on Naples.

Clough: how elusive a thing is fame! The poet enjoyed little of it during his brief, eventful life which ended at forty-two in Florence, just eighty-two years ago. He found his grave there close in place and time to Elizabeth Barrett Browning whose honoured dust five months before had for ever consecrated the little English cemetery of Florence, where three years later Walter Savage Landor was laid to rest. The fact that Miss Lilian Whiting in *The Florence of Landor* makes no mention of Clough shows how weak a clutch he had on fame, and yet it is given to poets to be remembered for one, just one flame of undying fire such as illumined like sudden lightning the name of Clough when Winston Churchill sent echoing through the world those four immortal lines of his poem's last quatrain. The uniqueness of the occasion demands the reprinting of the little poem here, the three preceding stanzas being in no way inferior to the fourth as poetry, though it is in it that the imagery of the poet attains its highest:

Say not, the struggle naught availeth,
  The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
  And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
  It may be, in yon smoke concealed,

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Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright!

Here is "Popular Poetry"

AND talking of verse, one might ask how many lines from *The White Cliffs* will stand the test of time, albeit that noteworthy contribution to the poetry of this all-changing War has sold as many copies in a month as Clough's has sold in a century.

Alice Duer Miller was a name unknown to me in contemporary American letters when I read her uncommon narrative in verse. "I shall not be surprised if it becomes familiar here as that of an author who has touched to fine issues those springs of emotion which are common to Britons and Americans alike. Indeed, I can imagine *The White Cliffs* starting a new vogue for poetry. Not that of the great authentic voices, where the emotional content and the words are wedded in perfect unity, but the simpler art of the rhymed narrative, which in Mrs. Miller's case produces moments of real beauty, even while carrying many lines that are plain prose." So I opined, and it is still too early to say I was over-enthusiastic.

Poetry is in no great demand today, judging by my own immediate range of acquaintance. There are, of course, the modern experimenters in new forms who attract a constricted public of highbrows, and from whose work something may emerge one day that will reach "the common reader", but I leave them out of my count. For the moment I am thinking of poetry that is understanded of the many, such lowbrow stuff as Pope, Byron, Crabbe, Wordsworth, Cowper, Tennyson, Longfellow and Whittier used to write. For there is no modernism in *The White Cliffs*, and if its form never rises to the serene heights of Wordsworth, but more often keeps company with him at his most pedestrian, it has an emotional quality which makes up for lack of form. It is a moving human document and that's the secret of popular appeal.

Whether *The White Cliffs* is autobiographical hardly matters: it is as intensely sincere as though it had all been experienced. An American girl visiting England on the eve of the last War marries an Englishman—who becomes heir to an old title—has a son,

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loses her husband in France, and remains in England to see her son grow up and be about to serve his country in the Second Great War. Here is the simple framework of her story which moves in increasing drama to the end. A genuine insight into the English character is shown by the author, tolerant and forgiving, setting nothing down in malice and at every turn commanding the reader's respect, even when she comes closer in her phrases to Geo. R. Sims than to Wordsworth. Her narrative is greatly helped by frequent ingenious changes of metre. Her power to suggest movement and drama in a few lines is remarkable; her reflections never banal. How true is this?

Lovers in peacetime,
With fifty years to live,
Have time to tease and quarrel
And question what to give;
But lovers in wartime
Better understand
The fullness of living,
With death close at hand.

The portrait of the heroine's father is the one thing—and it spills over a page by a few lines only—that displeases me. I am surprised that an American who was a master of Greek and could quote from the Anthology in all the sonority of the original, should be represented as a chauvinist Yankee and a narrow-minded hater of England just because of 1773 and 1812. One would have thought that with his love of the splendid Greek thinkers and poets, and of Greece as the home of democracy, he might have outgrown his contempt for the English of England just because the English of America had "whipped" them twice on American soil in circumstances of which most American historians shirk giving a dispassionateaccount.

And 'were they not English, our forefathers?
Never more English than when
They dared to be rebels against her.

Of liberty in America "the seed was English". Worthier of remembrance surely than those two "whippings".

How admirably Mrs. Miller informs with her own tolerant spirit the culminating passages of her poem, after picturing the young English son of the American mother, ready to be sent by the "rulers of England" to die for "this small green land"! One may demur to her notion of "a little band" ruling England, which merely shows that she has not appreciated the full extension of our democratic institutions and has a lingering illusion about the old school tie when—rather abruptly, as it seems to me—she makes an end of the story with Susan saying:

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I am American bred,
I have seen much to hate here—much to forgive,
But in a world where England is finished and dead,
I do not wish to live.

These last lines at least might become familiar as household words throughout America and will bring a thrill to many a reader here. Alice Duer Miller is another of the many authors who, in my time, have made remarkable successes only to die soon after, which, after all, is a more desirable fate than that of those—so many could be named—who have not lived to see their work acclaimed.

No Time to "Kill"!

I REFUSE to believe that "over-study" ever sent any man off his head, assuming his brain to be physically healthy before his studies were begun: the brain has an infinite capacity for thinking, and the more it is exercised the saner it becomes. Whenever I am perplexed with problems or disappointments of the moment I find nothing so stimulating as a night or two in the company of the ancient or modern philosophers, and this very night I'm going to complete the reading of A. W. Benn's admirably clear and concise *History of Ancient Philosophy* (a subject on which I must have read more than two hundred volumes in my time!) as an antidote to certain unexpected vexations that I have had to endure in the last few days.

Not for me the literature of "escape". In fact, I do not understand certain of my friends, for whose intellectual powers I have the highest respect, doping themselves daily with another new "thriller". I rejoice that in the days of my youth I read most of the standard fiction then in vogue—Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Lytton, the Kingsleys, George Eliot, the Brontës, Merivale, Lever, Ainsworth, Meredith, Hardy, Stevenson, Seton Merriman, Kipling—a glorious mixture of the great, the good, and the not-so-good, and an innumerable multitude of other novels as well. In later years I have read widely in French fiction and Spanish and to a less extent in Italian, not to mention tens of thousands of short stories in four languages. I feel that with this background your *Gone With the Winds*, and *North-West Passages*, and the scores of new and long-winded masterpieces that now flood the market may "whistle down the wind" for all I care But I would not for a moment turn any reader away from one of them. What pleases pleases, and there's an end on't. Some years ago I actually read all Edgar Wallace's novels—with a specific purpose in view which time has thwarted—and was mightily entertained in the process, but I have always felt, and feel today more than ever, that a book which serves

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only to " kill time " is not worth looking at. I have never had any time to kill. Life is so damnably short and our inheritance of good and profitable literature so vast that I grudge every hour I spend with the merely ephemeral and non-instructive.

But my job as a chronicler of the War has kept my mind so largely occupied since 1939 that I have had little time to pursue my personal inclinations in reading. Still I contrive to read two or three books every week, more often old than new. My eye caught *The Diffusion of Culture* by Elliot Smith on one of my shelves this week. Its author sent it to me on publication two or three years ago (as I thought). I took it down. Looked at the date : 1933. It had stood unread on the shelf since then. One tenth of my life. Really frightening how " time marches on ". Marches is far too sluggish a word. Elliot Smith was one of my most valued collaborators on *The Universal History of the World*, *Wonders of the Past*, and other of my publications, though I once got cross with him on the subject of " dualism " in Egyptian history and would not stand for a certain contribution in which he seemed to me to push his thesis too far. But his *Diffusion of Culture* has given me far more pleasure than any novel.

The vigour with which he attacks ethnologists of the older schools makes exhilarating reading. They believed that the different races of mankind throughout the world spontaneously and independently acquired their distinctive cultures, despite the close resemblances to be found between the manners and customs, for instance, of the Mayas in America and the Egyptians and other races in the old world. (It's forty years and more since I was enthralled by Plongeon's account of his astonishing discoveries in Maya civilization, which, by the way, Elliot Smith doesn't even mention.) Elliot Smith argues brilliantly in support of the theory that all culture had a common origin in Egypt and Mesopotamia, whence it was diffused throughout the world by wandering groups of people at various stages of development, by land and sea, rooting here and there and evolving on new lines in accordance with environment.

That is the only way to account for coincidence of myth and legend, or such specialized practices as mummifying, in widely separated countries of the Eastern and Western hemispheres. Naturally, he is no believer in the fascinating legend of a lost Atlantis. It must also be true that the earliest types of man evolved from the same anthropoid stock in one region of the world only. There were no " missing links " to look for in the American or Australian continents. Elliot Smith, who was Professor of Anatomy at London University for many years, was knighted a year after he wrote *The Diffusion of Culture*, three years later he was dead. Yes, life is short.

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"Scotch"—A Strange Blend

A BOOK society to which I subscribe sent me a "choice" volume just as I went off on a brief holiday. It is by an author of repute, none of whose limited writings I had read: Richard Hughes. It is entitled *In Hazard*, a phrase that means no more to me now that I have read the book than it did before. I thought I had struck something new, moving, great, after I had read a few pages and regretted that I had not read the author's earlier work, *A High Wind in Jamaica*. I have never been so caught by the description of a modern steamship: the soul of the ship analysed and laid bare, as it were, vivid, instinct with the actuality of truth, so I read on and on as the description of a terrific hurricane was developed . . . until I got seasick of ship and hurricane and didn't care a bean what happened to either.

But why do authors who don't know the Scots language attempt to write it? There are passages in *In Hazard* that are laughably grotesque; as grotesque as if I had attempted to write a line or two of colloquial German, knowing mighty little of the mother tongue. I ask my Scottish readers to listen to this:

"Weel, noo. Are we to tak' it that a human Chreestian is compoondit o' three pairts: his body, his min', an' his speerit?"

"The body dees, the speerit leeves?"

"Than whit o' the min'? That's nayther speerit nor body. Yet it's vera boont up wi' the body. A disease o' the body can disease the min'. A blow on the body can blot oot the min'. The min', like the body, graws auld an' decays. The daith o' the body, than, is that the daith o' the min' tae?"

"Allooin' it be," said MacDonald.

"Than the future life canna be of a vera pairsonal nature, A'm thinkin'; it is a saft, imbecile sort o' thing ma speerit would be wi'oot ma min'."

Never have I heard a Scot speak like that. Nor can I approve Mr. Hughes when he makes MacDonald say of the Chinese, "They dinna min' daith, whit way a whit' mon min's it." Although every Englishman may think so, no Scot ever, ever said "mon" for "man" ("mun" would be an approximation) nor "whit way" (which implies a question) when he would surely have said "th' wey", and when I read "In the Next Worrld Man (not Mon this time) casts Reason, Mr. Soutar, as I tau'd ye", I can neither accept the needless capitals nor "tau'd" for told; tell'd or telt would have passed. The whole phrase is absurd to any Scotsman. I'm sure that all the interesting and fascinating things Mr. Hughes tells me about a ship in a hurricane are truer to life than his "Scotch" is to the Scots with which I am familiar. Apropos of this, I had to point out many years ago to my old friend F. Frankfort Moore when

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he attempted some Scottish dialogue (which ought to have come easy to an Ulster man) in one of his many popular novels, that "Laird" is not the Scots equivalent of "Lord". He had written "By the Laird I hae ye the noo". Which being Englished would read "By the Squire I have you now".

Lament for Lord Lloyd

With quite unexpected sorrow I read one night that Lord Lloyd had passed away at the early age of sixty-one. I say "unexpected", because he was not one of my heroes. In fact, he was one of those persons you can honestly admire without liking. Many a night while I was staying for some months at the Carlton Hotel he occupied a table a few feet away from me, and he had a mien that did not seem to me *sympathique*. On such thin and irrational prejudices do we form our likes and dislikes. An hour or two with him in intimate conversation and I might have become one of his firm admirers. And yet I doubt that, as I have seldom found that a first, and even distantly formed, feeling of dislike can be eliminated by after acquaintance. All the same, I certainly wished him no ill, and the news of his death, after such recent propinquity, affected me with something of a shock and genuine regret. To lose the object of one's dislike is only less distressing than the loss of a friend. It's another link with life that's broken.

When I was staying for some weeks in Cairo, about twelve years ago, Lord Lloyd was often in the picture. He would leave the Residency to go, let's say, to the races, about as far as from Charing Cross to Hyde Park Corner. He issued from the Residency thus: two sturdy, tam-o'-shantered members of the Tank Corps on motor-bikes, armed to the eyebrows; succeeded by two red-fezzed British stalwarts of the Egyptian Police, likewise on motor-cycles and equally armed; followed by a large motor-car in which sat the High Commissioner with two armed detectives, then a smaller car with two or three more bodyguards; the procession completed by two more Anglo-Egyptian motor-police with their appropriate accoutrement. To my wife I said, on one of these occasions: "If this is the only way Lord Lloyd can govern Egypt, it won't last long." It didn't. Lord Cromer—true, in easier days—could go about in Cairo (I was told) as freely as George V in London.

One morning, not so long afterwards, Lord Lloyd and I were the only occupants of a Southern Railway Pullman. Years before he had been member for Eastbourne, and was now returning from a political gathering at which he had been speaking for one of his successors, that unhappy young man, Edward Marjoribanks. When we arrived at Victoria he got the attendant to pick up two rather shabby-looking suitcases and hand them to a porter, who

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carried them to a taxi and pocketed the usual tip. As the former High Commissioner to Egypt drove away ahead of me with his suitcases in that common old taxi I ruminated a little on the vanity of human wishes. But I was genuinely sorry to read that we had lost another public man of energy, enthusiasm and executive capacity —there are not too many available just now.

"*Lord Scrap-paper*"

One hears, these days, much about "inflation" without quite knowing how it works or what it really means. We saw something of its effect in Germany and Russia soon after the last war, when the mark was so debased that thousands instead of twenty went to the pound, and the rouble was in even a worse case. I remember gutter vendors in the Strand selling both marks and roubles at thousands (or was it millions?) for a penny! Well, early in the thirteenth century Ogadai, son and successor to Genghis-Khan, the bow-legged barbarian who had come as near to world-domination as any conqueror since the Cæsars, said to his Chinese adviser, "I am told that in Cathay they stamped money out of a worthless stuff, paper. Why cannot we print money in this fashion?" "True, it was done once," was the answer, "and they called the minister who did it Lord Scrap-paper. After a while, with this same precious paper, it took ten thousand *taels* to buy one cake." Whatever the *tael* was worth in 1229, it was the equivalent of the U.S. dollar a few years ago. So inflation is no new thing, however it be brought about.

I came across that anecdote in a very remarkable book—one of the most fascinating of the many I have lately read—*The March of the Barbarians* by Harold Lamb. It's my first acquaintance with this author, who has almost a dozen books to his credit, dealing mostly with kindred subjects: the history of the Mongols. His new work discloses a vast and intimate knowledge of the rise and decline of the Mongol tribes, and contains a short, colourful portrayal of Genghis-Khan, of whom he published a full biographical narrative thirteen years ago. *The March of the Barbarians* is worth many best-selling novels so far as enthralling narrative is concerned, and is written in a peculiarly vivid style which changes its movement in accord with the shifting scenes and tempo of the times depicted. Genghis, *mutatis mutandis*, was the Hitler of his day, or the other way round. Certainly one of the most amazing characters in the world's history, and nowhere portrayed more vividly or with greater erudition than in Mr. Lamb's pages. The Germans are the Barbarians of this later age, and it is instructive to gather from this remarkable book how little the veneer of modern culture has changed the Teutonic tribes who had long settled in cities while the Mongols remained nomadic.

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Another parallel of the present age of barbarism with the days of Genghis-Khan and his Mongol hordes : among the more frightening of the arrows with which these amazing horsemen of the Steppes struck terror and death into the civilized warriors of the west, Russia, Hungary, Bohemia, Austria, was one that whistled. Imagine scores of thousands of wild horsemen thundering down on the ranks of well ordered and finely caparisoned, but relatively tame cavalry, and crossbowmen discharging as they came clouds of steel-tipped arrows that whistled like a gale in the rigging ! And there you have an ancient anticipation of the whistling bomb. Or is the whistling bomb a deliberate throw-back by the barbarians today to their forerunners of the thirteenth century ? These were the days when the Chinese warriors wore fearsome masks to frighten their enemies. The Mongols didn't need to do so : nature had already provided them with faces that looked the part.

Nunquam at Ninety

I WAS glad when one of the " Sundays " gave Robert Blatchford the freedom of its editorial page to say what he liked on any subject he cared to choose. This to celebrate his ninetieth birthday. An old admirer of his, in the days of my youth the bleak, grey Sundays of Glasgow were brightened for me by the arrival of the *Sunday Chronicle* with Nunquam's eagerly awaited contribution. It's fully fifty years since he and his colleagues quit the *Chronicle* to found *The Clarion*, each of them sacrificing substantial salaries to be free to express their increasingly leftish opinions. Not much of that spirit among journalists in these latter days. In all the years that he ran *The Clarion* Blatchford averaged about a fiver a week for his work, and I suppose his friend and colleague, A. M. Thompson, journalistically famous in those distant days as " Dangle ", and his junior by just ten years, didn't make any fatter living out of that pioneer organ of social reform. " Pioneers, oh, pioneers ! "

Thompson also is still alive and not long ago stayed for a little while in a cottage of mine where he wrote a charming article for a London paper describing his discovery of this corner of Arcadia—the Arcadia to which the stress of war has now brought me ! Who better to write of it than the author of *The Arcadians* ? A unique quartette of gifted men were they who together started *The Clarion*. Blatchford, his brother Montague (" Mont Blanc "), artist and poet, Edward Francis Fay (" The Bounder "), who wrote such delightful foolery under the heading of " Babble on Babylon " addressed from " 2, Little Toke Street ", and Thompson. (Is " toke " still good slang for money, or has the American " dough " entirely ousted it ?) These men occupied a big place in my youthful imagination,

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and after half a century I believe I could still quote from memory passages from their writings.

Blatchford's ideals of social reform have undergone some change in these fifty years. But his pen has never lost its point, and here he is a nonagenarian still using it to some purpose. The burden of his article today is: "Never trust the Germans again. Still the same old Huns." With which I am in heartiest accord. Indeed, I was one of the first to protest in print against the official British view that we were fighting a political party known as the Nazis, who had got control of the dear, good, kindly, industrious German people. We are fighting a nation of Huns: enemies of all the world, a predatory and pestilent people who from time to time through two thousand years have proved themselves the curse of Europe and of mankind.

Every book that Nunquam has written in his long life I have read. Only during his excursion into Spiritualism did I find myself at variance with him. What did surprise me when, in my *Outline of English Literature*, I compared him "in some respects" with William Cobbett, was his protesting rather indignantly against any such comparison. Just why it was odious to him I cannot imagine. Both were writers of idiomatic English, both were fearless journalists ready to sacrifice their personal interests in the expression of their views—no matter how greatly their views may have differed—and both had spent their early manhood as soldiers. I was treating of them as writers and not as political controversialists.

Edmund Yates and Changed Times

"THE world went very well then," was the thought with which I put *Edmund Yates: His Recollections and Experiences* back on the shelf a few minutes ago, after two nostalgic hours. Not indeed that I long to return to the days of my youth—far otherwise; yet there's a "something" that vibrates the strings of memory to wistfulness when you read of them. I first read Yates's story of his life a year or two after his death in 1894, and have dipped into it many a time since. For it is to me one of the most delightful autobiographies ever written: certainly a classic for every journalist. When I first read it I little thought that I should in after years become a close friend of his son Smedley, and an acquaintance of his other son, Charles—the one dead since 1934, the latter since 1937. The genial, frank, intensely human character of Edmund was reflected in both of them. And through them, and his own revealing narrative, I am sure that the proper epithet for Edmund Yates as a man was "lovable". Few of my readers will ever have heard his name. His famous journal, *The World*, which he founded with the celebrated Grenville Murray in 1874, was taken to its grave not many years

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ago by a former colleague of mine, Hamilton Edwards, who purchased it in its declining days and has himself passed away.

Yates knew everybody in the literary, theatrical and social world of his day and was a close friend of Charles Dickens. A veritable pageantry of English celebrities passes through his lively pages, all illumined by some sidelight which he directs upon them, and the whole captivating story which he tells resolves itself into a picture of a lost world. A world of social life and happiness destroyed for ever by the beastly Huns of 1914 and the bestial Nazis of 1939. Two or three things I have particularly noted in my glances backward through Yates's eyes tonight. One is the delight with which he, already an eminent journalist, novelist, and lecturer in 1873, agreed to place himself at the service of Gordon Bennett, the magnate who was running the *New York Herald* in the seventies (and until his death in 1918), as its European representative, and worked for it with demoniac fury in every part of the Continent, for an annual salary of £1,200.

Now, I read in an evening paper the other day that a certain London journalist is " a £6,000 a year reporter ", and I know that some of our columnists are paid from £3,000 to £6,000 a year for writing Sunday paper features, none of which, in my opinion, can possibly be compared with anything Yates produced. Times change, indeed. But so do money values. £1,200 a year in 1873 was probably worth £6,000 today. The income tax on Yates's salary would not exceed £30, whereas that " £6,000 a year reporter " will be paying over £3,000 in income tax and surtax. Thus the £1,170 net which Yates earned in 1873 has to be compared with something less than a net £3,000, and I doubt not that Yates could get far better value for his money than the incredibly rich reporter in question. Indeed, I've just been asking myself if, earning ten times as much as I did in 1900, I'm very much better off when the genial gentlemen of the Income Tax have rifled my pockets.

Another thing I noted in my re-reading of Yates is that M. Camille Barrère, an eminent French diplomat, contributed an article to the first number of *The World* on " Communists in London " which, according to its editor, " was full of novel and interesting information ". That was seventy years ago, remember. We have learned a lot of novel and interesting things about communists since then. And one more : in the same number Mrs. Lynn Linton, who so vigorously fought against what she regarded as the cheapening of femininity by too much finery and face powder, contributed an article on " Jezebel la à mode ". If ever she re-visits the glimpses of the moon she must have had many a shock in seeing how completely our " Girls of the Period " have now lined up with the girls of Piccadilly in lipstick and facial make-up. On the whole, I think it makes many of them " easier on the eyes ". Lipstick, let me add,

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has vastly reduced the osculatory ratio in our time, as the incarnadined lips of many a kissable creature have become as forbidding as the sign " Wet Paint " on the benches in the park !

Lunch with a Poet Laureate

WHEN my dear old friend St. John Adcock was editing *The Bookman* he planned a special number featuring the poetry and personality of Robert Bridges, who had recently become poet laureate in succession to Alfred Austin (1913), the laureate *pour rire*. I thought then and still think Bridges was not a happy choice (Asquith's) as his poetry appealed, and still appeals, only to the few, who rightly admire it for its classic beauty and austerity of thought. It stirs no sort of emotion in the minds of the multitude, as Tennyson's never failed to do while still conforming to scholarly ideals. Kipling was the obvious choice—but not for Asquith. And perhaps Kipling may have let it be known that he would not care for the official bays. Anyhow old Bridges evidently expressed in his personality something of the aridity of his poetry, for he invited Adcock to lunch with him at a Slater's restaurant near Oxford Circus to discuss certain details which he had agreed to supply for *The Bookman* special. Adcock—himself no mean poet—kept the appointment to the minute and found his host awaiting him at a table for two. " As I got here early," said Bridges, " I've taken the opportunity to order our meal, and since I eat hardly anything at lunch I've just ordered one portion of fried plaice and some potatoes between us. Perhaps you would like a sweet to follow, but I'll be well served with a little bit of the fish. " So far as I remember, Adcock told me that after this beggarly and embarrassing repast, washed down with aqua pura, they had some delightful talk on literary subjects. He was then glad to hurry to a nearby Lyon's and make-up with tea and poached eggs on toast.

The Horse in War

EARLY in the War I expressed my relief that mechanization, which had brought so many new horrors to the conflict, had got rid of at least one—the martyrdom of the horse. Horses had, of course, been destroyed in thousands when Poland was overrun owing to the foolish faith in cavalry which the Poles retained. But I was altogether too hopeful, as the horse, mule and donkey are all being used in large numbers in the worst of the battle zones. In Greece the nature of the country brought them into use in conditions of appalling misery among the snow-covered mountains of her Albanian frontier; Germans are making great use of them in supply columns; the Russians employ them by the thousand for Cossack

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cavalry; and they are at work in surprising numbers in North Africa and the Near East as well as in the China-Japan battle areas. The poor, dumb, suffering creatures whose complete innocence of all offence and hatreds makes their martyrdom so pathetic.

William L. Shirer in his *Berlin Diary* has many references to the dead horses he saw along the routes of the invaders in Belgium and France. The other day I had before me a photograph of an entire train load of Russian horses sacrificed to prevent their falling into Nazi hands. Cut off from escape, the Russians, faithful to the scorched-earth policy, ran the train conveying the horses over a cliff into the sea, where on the rocky shore their bodies were piled high amid the tangled wreckage of the train. The mind recoils from contemplating the hideous horror of their death agonies, and yet the hard facts of war justify the Russians (who are real lovers of horses) in such an action. Their resolute destruction of the beautiful modern cities they have built up in the last ten years is the best proof of their determination to do nothing to help the enemy. It may be sheer sentimentalism, but I can't get that mountain of mangled horses out of mind.

While I can rejoice wholeheartedly in the killing of Germans and am glad that their Führer esteems them no higher than did the Kaiser, who dubbed them cannon fodder, I hate to think of the horses they are sacrificing, for whom I feel equal sympathy with the many Russian horses doomed to slaughter in the defence of our Soviet allies. The swift death of any creature, man or beast, by bullet or bomb, matters little: what horrifies is the prolonged agony suffered by the mangled bodies on the battlefields before merciful death arrives. The Russian loves his horse just as the British trooper makes a chum of his mount, whereas to the dehumanized Hitler-bred soldier the horse is merely a means to an end, while the Italian and the Spaniard are traditionally and instinctively cruel to all domestic animals.

Only recently have I realized that a considerable proportion of the horses used by the Nazis are Irish bred. Thanks to a young Irish girl, who is a keen lover of horses and writes me most surprising letters from time to time, have I been put wise in this regard. She tells me, for instance, that four members of the German Jumping Team who attended the Dublin Horse Show in August, 1939, arrived some months earlier in Eire and were frank enough to admit to a reporter of the *Cork Examiner* that they were buying up horses for the Nazi army. Rittmeister Brickman, one of the team, told a relative of hers at the Show that they had to round up their purchases and get them shipped to Germany before the end of the following week, which, as she points out, would just allow these Irish horses to get to Germany one week before Hitler decided to "put a stop to this lunacy" in Poland. "Anyway," she goes on,

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" I saw in an Irish paper, about a week after War was declared, that the last of the 10,000 horses bought by these Germans in this country had arrived at Hamburg. The last one disembarked was a fine grey mare bought at Clonmel Fair and the Germans had painted ' Clonmel ' on her side in green letters. "

My young correspondent gives practical evidence of her interest in horse lore by sending me an article, published in the magazine *Riding*, April 1939, entitled " Horses in the Next War ". From this it is clear that the Nazis would have an eye to the rich booty awaiting them in the shape of horses as soon as they got hold of Yugoslavia with its more than one million horses, Poland and Rumania also having immense herds of horses to be seized for war transport and cavalry remounts. The concluding paragraph of the article in *Riding* (it was written by Eric Hardy, F.Z.S.) is worth reprinting in this connexion :

" For the last few years the Germans have been buying horses and have added a troop of mounted infantry to each regiment of foot, and stocky Norwegian-bred pack-horses are being imported for mountain warfare. Many of these were used in the march into Austria. She is also relying upon them in the event of a long war and shortage of motor fuel. The British army has kept but two regiments of regular cavalry, besides those of the Household, as sufficient ! The Swiss, like the French, are using cavalry in conjunction with their mechanized troops, but the British army's almost complete discarding of the horse has caused amazement abroad. Are we so sure we shall never be called upon to fight in hill country ? "

Did Shakespeare forget Magna Carta ?

HAVING had occasion to look up Shakespeare's *King John* to verify a quotation last night, I found myself, before I quite realized it, starting from the beginning to read through the play. Nor did I give up until I had enjoyed every line of it right down to the resounding :

> Come the three corners of the world in arms,
> And we shall shock them : nought shall make us rue,
> If England to itself do rest but true.

What lovely splendour of English there is in this comparatively early work of the immortal Will ! And yet it is really a re-writing of a crude dramatic composition by an unknown, anti-Catholic author, first printed in 1571, just three years before Shakespeare transmuted the whole in the alembic of his genius from base metal to purest gold. It is worth noting that the older play ended with these lines :

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If England's Peers and People join in one
Nor Pope, nor France, nor Spain can do them wrong.

Contrast these with Shakespeare's lines. But both have a message for the moment, and indeed the whole play—for all its false history—has the liveliest interest for present-day reading. I had not read it for more than thirty years, when I had to make it the subject of a special study, and I had forgotten that it was " so full of quotations ".

Shakespeare is so universal a genius that he touches life at every level and in every age, and his words can be fitted to every topic. A Shakespeare Calendar I recently published showed us how aptly he has a tag for anything that happens any day just now.

France friend with England ! What becomes of me ?
Fellow begone : I cannot brook thy sight.

Imagine these words of Constance to Salisbury addressed by Laval to De Gaulle, who could throw back at him—

This news hath made thee a most ugly man

And then again what of this ?—

Look'st thou pale, France ? do not let go thy hand.
Look to it, devil ! Lest that France repent,
And by disjoining hands, hell lose a soul.

What a quotation for June 23, 1940 ! We have every reason to hope, moreover, that hell won't lose that soul. (Perhaps I should explain that here " France " stands for King Philip, as " England " for King John.) There is indeed no event of the War for which Shakespeare does not somewhere provide an apt quotation, such as

King Philip : . . . England, I will fall from thee.
Queen Eleanor : O foul revolt of French inconstancy !
King John : France, thou shalt rue this hour within this hour.

And where shall we find a neater tag for aerial attack than

Some airy devil hovers in the sky,
And pours down mischief ?

Faulconbridge (" the Bastard "), who is the real protagonist of *King John*, is one of Shakespeare's manliest creations, with all the honest patriotism, energy, determination, and natural English humour that so well become a great leader in time of crisis. Just such a leader as we are fortunate to have in this great hour—though he was not born " on the wrong side of the blanket " !

All this I have set down today as the result of verifying the last line of the play which I saw misquoted yesterday " If England to

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herself do rest but true". And, by the way, it shows how little Shakespeare bothered about historical detail that he could write *The Life and Death of King John* without a word about Magna Carta! Bacon would never have done that.

Some Thoughts on Whiskers

HAD that "amoosin' cuss", Frank Richardson, been fated to live until this day he would have had a great time making fun of the "face fungus" which is spreading mushroom-like through the Navy just now. I didn't realize until last night, when I sat near to a group of sturdy young officers—the highest a full lieutenant—in the "Wavy Navy", how little I admired those who were bearded like the pard. How the young girls with them could tolerate these germ jungles of whiskers I cannot understand. Perhaps they had agreed to them for the duration only, in which case I hope they will set their faces (sternly) against them when the bells of victory ring . . . which reminds me that "pa had his whiskers shaved" as an expression of rejoicing in one of Albert Chevalier's famous ditties.

There is genuine honour in the unshaven faces of the submarine men or the gallant lads who man the little ships just returned from a spell at sea; but any male creature (and some females) can grow a whisker and comb and caress it without going to sea. I had hoped that with the rising popularity of the safety razor the only whiskers still enduring were those that had taken root in the late Victorian age, such as those of John Dumphreys, M.P. for Bermondsey back in 1909, when Lucas and Graves celebrated his victory in these immortal lines:

So when John Dumphreys topped the poll,
"In gratitude", said he,
"One whisker I'll call Hammerton
The other I'll call Mee."

When to the barber's next he went
He cried in agonie:
"Deal gently with my Hammerton,
Deal gentlier with my Mee!"

At a later date the game of beaver-spotting had a brief but joyous vogue. You shouted "beaver" whenever you saw a whiskered male or female as you sped along in your car, and you counted score as in tennis. I became a life-champion by virtue of discovering a "red queen beaver", seated with two other perfect specimens of the queen beaver (but not red) on a bench in Tunbridge Wells. (Origin of term "beaver" unknown.) But one had to go to Bel-

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gium and Northern France to bag the finest specimens of queen beavers—the women there are sometimes as whiskery as the men. There's a silly saying that " a hairy man is a happy man ". He is merely a reminder that we have not got so far away from the apes as we fancy. As for a hairy woman . . . don't ask *my* opinion.

Recently I read in an article by an American doctor that it is quite wrong to suppose that hairiness is a sign of strength. That derives possibly from the story of Samson. Actually this " vegetable " growth on our epidermis is more often an indication of physical weakness. Wonder if the theory that in origin it is vegetable matter may be founded on the fact that hair on a corpse continues to grow for some time after death takes place—I gather, by the way, from a recent study of Sir Charles Sherrington's remarkable work *Man on His Nature* that it would seem all life may have started from the same sort of cell: that the grey rock and the blue dragon-fly darting past it had a common origin 100 million years ago! That the lettuce Bernard Shaw is munching is only a little more remote in origin from the cellular creature eating it than my *sole meunière* is from me!—But that's a point " I leave to your contendance ", as a young girl of my acquaintance used to put it. And finally, the Romans, most virile of the conquering races, were all clean shaven, though when they took over some of the gods of Greece they respected their curly whiskers . . . but Apollo, Mars and a few others were represented as whiskerless.

I find no fault in Hitler's little moustache—neither would Frank Richardson, who allowed himself a modest moustache—except that it is still a sort of dredger for pea soup, but there's nothing loathlier than to see a well-whiskered face struggling with Scotch broth or minestrone. Nor is there anything manly in bushy beards. They are recommended only to persons with receding chins . . . above all they should have no place in an age that values sanitation.

Another thing: two friends of mine, who have worn " imperials " until their hair has turned grey, are debating whether to go down to their graves with them or look twenty years younger by shaving them off. Beware of that, ye young salts, who are displaying your abundant coal-black beards today! You have been warned.

Leap-Frog in Bookland

UNLIKE the amateur reader, one whose life-business has been the study of books, the writing of books, and the editing of books, can seldom " lose himself " in one book at a time. In my own case, at least, I have always several " on the go " at the same time: turning from one to another as my inclination prompts. Thus in looking back over a typical month of reading I find that at times I played leap-frog with no fewer than four. I had started on *Thoughts*

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Through Space, by Sir Hubert Wilkins and Harold Sherman, a hefty volume which was specially ordered from America as it dealt in a new and almost sensational way with telepathy, a natural phenomenon which has interested me from the remote days of youth, and after a chapter or two I turned to *Evenings in Albany*, by Clifford Bax, a joyous experience, for I was instantly in touch with a kindred spirit, in both time and place, having but one point of divergence—cricket, his undying enthusiasm for which leaves me far colder than Colonel Blimp yarning about his days at Poonah. Next came *Physics and Philosophy*, by Sir James Jeans—there's always a Jeans book on my bedside table—into which I dipped, before taking up *Destination Chungking*, by Han Suyin, which in ten minutes I knew must be read to the last word.

These four were by no means the sum total of my book-reading for that month; but they were the quartette with which I played leap-frog. The two that stayed the course and involved the longest leaps were Clifford Bax's banquet of nostalgic delights and Han Suyin's glorious story of Chinese life and adventure. No two books could more widely differ from each other in everything but the charm of their writing. It might be thought that the greater credit for this was due to Han Suyin, whose command of the English idiom is superb, whereas one expects a highly cultured Englishman to write his own language well—but not always so well as Clifford Bax writes it.

There is something of mystery about Han Suyin, however. We are told in the foreword that the facts are authentic autobiography, but "in this era of international chaos the publishers are not at liberty to disclose the real names of the authors". A little disconcerting this, as Han Suyin is supposed to be a Chinese lady just "rising twenty-four", who has had the most romantic life that any young woman of any race has ever had. The plural of "author" might explain the perfection of "her" narrative style if not the experiences recorded. I was quite fascinated by Suyin's personal confessions, with her vivid descriptions of her long adventurous journey from London to Chungking, and with her glimpses of life in the Big Family at her ancestors' home in Chengtu. These made me feel that had I not been born in the storied land of Scott and Burns and been assured by R.L.S. that the happiest lot in life was to be born a Scotsman, I should have rejoiced to be Suyin's Third Uncle. He was capable of practising caligraphy while the dirty little Japs were destroying Chungking, and he never wavered in the finest strokes of those queer Chinese characters! In their more ancient home at Piksien, to which the Big Family had to withdraw when Chengtu itself was attacked by the Jap bombers, her great-grandfather generations ago had "balanced panels at right and left of the gate carved with his verses"—

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In the evening mists, far removed from city clamour,
Under the bamboos of my planting, I play the lute.
In the quiet of my life's ending, duty completed,
With my sons and sons' children, rest and make poems.

Perhaps it might be a better world if the old Chinese way of life could be restored and extended. There is a description of the first bombing of Chungking in this book which will never be surpassed by any writer. I venture a guess that some day, when the facts may be told, we shall learn that the vigorous and idiomatic English in which this remarkable book is written is not the unaided expression of a young Chinese woman but the mature art of a very brilliant and famous American novelist, hence the use of the plural in the allusion to its " authors ".

As for *Evenings in Albany*, it came first out of the game of leap-frog because I so revelled in Clifford Bax's reminiscences of his life at that memory-haunted spot in Piccadilly until he was blasted out, that I found it difficult to turn aside from it, taking at least three or four chapters at each jump. Some of his stories romanticized from actual happenings are gems of artistic narrative, but it was his personal likings and prejudices among the authors of today and yesterday that most engaged me and especially his two chapters on Alexander Smith, the Scottish poet-essayist whose *City Poems*, *Dreamthorpe*, and *A Summer in Skye* I read half-a-century ago and still have at arm's reach. The book will not appeal to the younger generation but to us older book-lovers it brings the light of other days around us—days that are vanished as completely as those of the suave joys and spiritual satisfactions of the Big Family in Szechwan.

My disappointment with *Thoughts Through Space*, which I have not finished reading, and do not intend to finish, is due to no lack of interest in its contents, but to the superabundance of its detail. When Wilkins in 1937 went to the Arctic Ocean with a flying expedition to search for Levanevsky's lost Soviet expedition he managed, daily at a certain hour, to concentrate his thoughts on Sherman who was to be waiting in New York in a state of receptivity. The results were astonishing and it is not too much to say that new paths in Telepathy were opened by this completely successful experiment. But the fact of Telepathy has long since emerged from the realm of uncertainty and the evidence here furnished is almost embarrassingly copious, so that the mind tires in reading it. At least mine did. I am placing the book (sumptuous enough to make any English publishers' eyes goggle with envy) among my works of reference, for I shall surely have need of it if I ever come to write on Telepathy.

Unnumbered hours of delight have been mine accompanying Sir

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James Jeans through the starry spaces, as no one has ever written so luminously on astronomical subjects ; not Flammarion, or Proctor, or Sir William Ball, whose writings were the joy of my earlier years ; but I find him less acceptable when he endeavours to link physics and philosophy, and in this latest and most sustained effort in that direction least of all. I am the completest amateur in both physics and philosophy although I have read much in recent years on these matters, including the translated works by Max Planck, originator of the Quantum theory and some of William MacDougal's difficult studies in psychology. Prof. Joad's *Guide to Philosophy* (read with great care during three weeks by the Mediterranean in 1936) is unexcelled and the late Prof. Susan Stebbing's *Ideals and Illusions*, which I found a source of stimulation when read in 1941, make a far surer appeal to my mind and such powers of reasoning as I possess than this latest and lively Jeans who frankly describes himself as an " intruder " in the realm of philosophy. His other books, such as *Through Space and Time*, and *The Mysterious Universe*, I have read and re-read, and hope to read again.

The Influence of Joy

In the domestic upheaval caused by my having evacuated my dwelling by the sea and taken to a rural way of life in a Downland village, several quaint things came to light. One of them : a sixty-year-old book entitled *The Influence of Joy upon the Workman and His Work*, by H. Bendelack Hewetson, M.R.C.S. How it ever got into my library I cannot guess. But for the fun of the thing I sat down and read it. It is a piece of brazen egotism, crudely expressed, destitute of even one illuminating thought. Obviously Dr. Hewetson fancied himself as an author and thinker (a Ruskinite, of course) and had this lecture of his (delivered at Beverley) expensively produced with crude collotype and colour plates. I mention it only because I have just had an opportunity of studying " the workman " close-up in changing my home. And I can find scant evidence of " joy " in the work he has done for me. Unless the terrific energy with which the removal men cleared out the rooms and snatched up the stair carpets before you could say " knife " was indicative of joy.

On reflection, I think the furniture removers showed more joy in their job than any workman I've had to employ, save a slightly deaf country carpenter who has been toiling furiously fashioning some timber outhouses. I'm sure he had a thrill of happiness as he tested the fine rigid results of his hammering. You don't need to be an " artist " and paint futile imitations of wild roses (as Hewetson did) to experience joy in work. But wherever the workman (using the term generically) could go wrong his joy was to go

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wrong. Electric fittings wrongly fixed have had to be pulled down and replaced by my chauffeur, black-out curtains have had to be re-made by my wife, and quite half-a-dozen other details indoors and out have had to be readjusted by us after the joyful workman had finished with them.

I wonder if joy really has any influence on the modern workman. The machine-mindedness of our age has probably eliminated it entirely. The trade unions take no account of it. Though I must note another approach to joy which I have perceived in this upheaval: the neatness with which the coalman stacked the coal, coke, and anthracite. And I can imagine that to make a neat job of coal and coke can leave even the humble coal-heaver with a certain measure of joy in his work. But the real titbit in Dr. Hewetson's elaborately produced volume is the information that in the "Friend's Retreat", a mental home near New York, in 1879, six out of eleven admissions were due to "over-study and mental work". All the unhappy six were men, and only one case was due to "disappointment in love": a female, needless to note.

Reading for Pleasure

THERE are times—usually as another month is being ticked off on my calendar of work—when I look back with surprise at the extent and variety of my reading; often I have read as many as a dozen books, new and old, in addition to many articles in the monthly reviews, pamphlets, and all the metropolitan daily and weekly papers that matter. And very pleasant is the feeling induced by having added so much to the storeroom of the mind, even if it may later involve a certain amount of fumbling about there to get at the items which most caught my fancy, should I wish to apply or reconsider them. My reading is conditioned largely by having to keep abreast of current thought as that finds expression in books on the War, and the quest for instructive and new writing on any subject under the sun likely to be to the taste of my *World Digest* public. Withal, I contrive to read a good deal purely for personal enjoyment, and there the poets, the essayists, the writers on art and archæology, the zoologists and a handful of novelists prevent my ever knowing what is called a dull moment.

It's a failing of mine to light upon notable books years after their first appearance, often when they have gone out of circulation. My quest for *The Quest for Corvo*, by A. J. A. Symons, first printed in 1934 and last as a "Penguin" in 1941, is a case in point. Having exhausted every means to secure a copy I had to get one on loan. After the first page or two I put aside all else that I was reading in order to enjoy the study of one of those rare characters that are compact of genius and mendacity. Frederick William Rolfe, who

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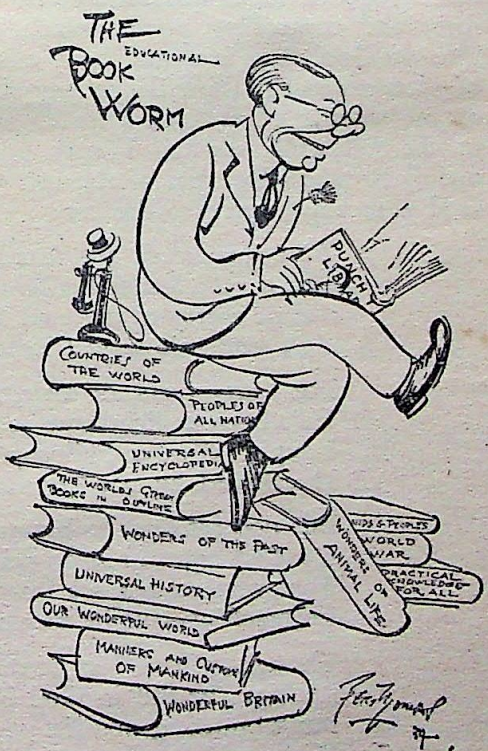
masqueraded for some years as Baron Corvo, had all the elements of rascality in a weird mélange of religiosity, vanity, sincere love of learning, insincere pretensions of scholarship, sexual perversion, asceticism and *folie de la grandeur*, incapacity for true friendship, enthusiasm for work ; hater of shams, himself continually shamming, an unconscionable liar, traitor to all who succoured him—what a man ! Loathing all Roman Catholic priests his dearest desire was to be one, and he signed himself Fr. Rolfe, and tonsured his head to pretend he was. One of the might-have-beens of English literature, his faults of character excluding him for ever from the society of the elect when a tiny tincture of some finer quality might have placed him among the famous writers of his time.

Symons calls his book "an experiment in biography" : an entirely successful experiment which I might liken to that of the conjurer who shows you how he does his tricks, for in his quest for the personality of the mysterious Corvo he takes us with him and describes in minute detail the pertinacious pursuit which he brought to such a successful conclusion. I have seldom had greater delight out of any piece of modern biography, but life's too short for me to embark upon a study of Rolfe's own writings, such as *Hadrian the Seventh* or his history of the Borgias, on which Symons throws most illuminating side-lights, yet I am more than glad to have added to my gallery of contemporary writers the strangely fascinating portrait of Barton Corvo, humbug of genius, that disengages itself from the pages of this remarkable book.

Symons himself was a young author whose personal acquaintance I had looked forward to making, but he is already one with "the dark backward and abysm of time", although when I was reading his *Quest of Corvo* he was full of plans for future work and was engaged upon



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writing a Life of Oscar Wilde and editing a definitive edition of his works. I have not heard what has happened to the many unique musical-boxes which, in pursuit of his Victoriana, it was his hobby to collect. He was born in 1900 and died in 1943. A few more years of life and he would surely have won an enduring position in English letters.

Joad from Sunshine to Shadow

SINCE C. E. M. Joad has left behind him the sunshine of Agnosticism after thirty years of basking in it for the shadow of Theism—the antithesis is not mine but Joad's—he has written many provocative articles and one book that I have just been reading. I seldom miss anything he writes. He is always stimulating; often particularly so when you least agree with him. In this new book I find myself more interested in the earlier part, where he gives a sort of *aperçu* of his attitude of mind and mental experience during his thirty years of agnosticism, than in the later and major part of it, wherein he discloses an unsuspected measure of sentiment—the influence of the dim religious light of a cathedral for instance—by avowing his change of mind concerning the existence of some creative force and controlling power which he now identifies with the idea of God. But it would be a misrepresentation of his point of view to call it Christian in any sense. The occasion seemed to me worthy of at least a *jeu d'esprit* and I have been moved to the following, written I may add in a near Scots idiom mainly to take advantage of the fact that in the north Joad and God agreeably rhyme to the ear:

A've just heard tell that man ca'ed Joad
Has ta'en a leaf frae Elginbrodde:
" Ha'e mercy o' my soul Lord God
As I wad ha'e were I Lord God . . ."

For thirty years, or mair, says he,
He's been as lichtsome as a flea
Loupin' a' ower Philosophy,
Daurkened by nae Diveenity.

But noo his trust in brains has sunk,
Must we expect him to debunk
That vera science sae lang he's striv'n
To teach us—jist by wey o' livin'?

Though at long last he may perceive
It's time he did in God believe,
I'm wondering noo jist whether God
Micht tak' as lang to believe in Joad.

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